



The Schlake Ranch

AN EVALUATION OF THE FARMSITE AND STRUCTURES IMPACTED BY THE
PETALUMA SKY RANCH AIRPORT FINAL RELOCATION PROJECT: FINAL
REPORT

By

Dennis E. Harris, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
Michael K. Shainsky, Graduate Research Assistant
Constance Tudor Braiton, Graduate Research Assistant
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August 31, 1981

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Prepared in Fulfillment of Contract
with the City of Petaluma

William Liebel
Program Administrator
Petaluma, California 94952

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Summary of Report	2
Location of Site	2
Inclusive Dates of Study	3
Purpose of Report	6
Names, Qualifications, and Responsibilities of Investigators	7
RESEARCH DESIGN	
Literature Search	12
Records Search	14
Interviews	15
Maps	17
Field Survey	17
THE SCHLAKE RANCH: LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE, 1823 - 1981	
Introduction	19
Spanish Conquest, Mexican Independence, and U.S. Acquisition	20
The Alberding Ranch, 1855 - 1859	25
The Green Ranch, 1859 - 1882	27
The Healy Ranch, 1882 - 1885	33
The Schlake Ranch, 1885 - 1949	35
The Jurgensen Ranch, 1949 - 1970	42
Tenant and Landlord, 1970 - 1981	44

Pe

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

	<u>Page</u>
THE SCHLAKE RANCH: SITE SURVEY	
Site Survey Summary	46
Housestead	48
Farmstead	52
FROM SCHLAKE RANCH TO SKY RANCH AIRPORT	
Historical Significance of the Schlake Ranch Site	64
Historical Significance of the Schlake Ranch Structures	65
Evaluation of the Potential Effect of the Sky Ranch Airport Relocation on the Schlake Ranch	66
Preservation and Mitigation Recommendations	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	69
LIST OF MAPS	
1. AP # 136-070-07 USGS 15' Topo: Petaluma and Santa Rosa Quads.	4
2. AP # 136-070-07 USGS 7.5' Topo: Cotati, Glen Ellen, Petaluma, and Petaluma River Quads.	5
3. Lot 250 Plat of the Petaluma Rancho, 1860, C.C. Tracy	22
4. Lot 250 Plat of the Western Portion of Petaluma Rancho, surveyed 1851-1859, C. E. & E. Rowe	24
5. Lot 250 Map of Sonoma County, 1867, A. B. Bowers	29
6. Lot 250 Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, 1877, T. H. Thompson	30
7. SW 1/2 of Lot 250 Illustrated Atlas of Sonoma County, 1897, Reynolds & Proctor	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

	<u>Page</u>
LIST OF MAPS (Cont.)	
8. Schlake Ranch Housestead, 1981, Shainsky	49
9. Schlake Ranch Farmstead, 1981, Shainsky	53
LIST OF TABLES	
1. Interest Rates Charged for Mortgages on Lot 250	34
2. Land Values	38
3. Tax Assessments	41
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS	
02/14 Overview of Farmsite	56
01/06 Ranch House, Schlake Addition	56
01/10 Ranch House and Water Tower	57
01/09 Ranch House, west facade, three portions of ranch house	57
01/15 Ranch House, east view with trumpet vine	58
01/12 Three Housestead Outbuildings (privy, dairyhouse smokehouse)	58
01/13 Two Housestead Outbuildings (shiplap outbuilding east of house, woodshed)	59
01/17 Old Barn, front facade	59
01/31 Old Barn, back facade	60
01/18 Grain House and Chicken Brooder	60
01/20 Colony Chicken House with Roof Ventilater	61
01/22 New Barn	61
01/29 New Barn, detail showing cobblestones	62
01/24 Poultry Complex	62
01/28 Blacksmith's Shop and Adjacent Foundation	63

Introduction

This study is an historical evaluation of a farmsite in East Petaluma from 1823 to the present. The project was undertaken at the request of Mr. William Liebel, Program Administrator for the City of Petaluma. The study identifies and evaluates the primary and secondary historical sources consulted in the course of research. It identifies, describes and evaluates the historical significance of those individuals associated with the site. It describes land use and evaluates the relationship between the site and the surrounding community over time. It includes a description of the site and its nineteen historical structures, an assessment of the historical significance of the site, its structures, and associated individuals, an estimation of potential adverse impacts on the identified cultural resources, and a formulation of project alternatives and mitigation measures designed to lessen recognized adverse impacts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Summary of Report

This historical and cultural resource study of a 41.786 parcel of land within the Proposed Sky Ranch Airport Relocation Project boundaries resulted in the identification of nineteen historical structures, twelve of which would be adversely impacted by the proposed project. Although the individual buildings were determined to have no architectural or historical significance on a state or national level, the ranch, taken as a whole, was deemed to have local significance as a working example of a self-sufficient farm which has remained relatively unchanged since the 1890's. The history of the farmsite and surrounding cultivated fields is representative of Petaluma Valley agriculture during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although several of the owners played roles of limited local significance, the site was not deemed to be associated with major events, or significant persons in the history of the state and nation. In addition to the surface structures and site, two subsurface sites were identified which may have minimum research value to historical archaeologists. Mitigation recommendations are made for the site, its structures, and the subsurface sites identified.

Location of Site

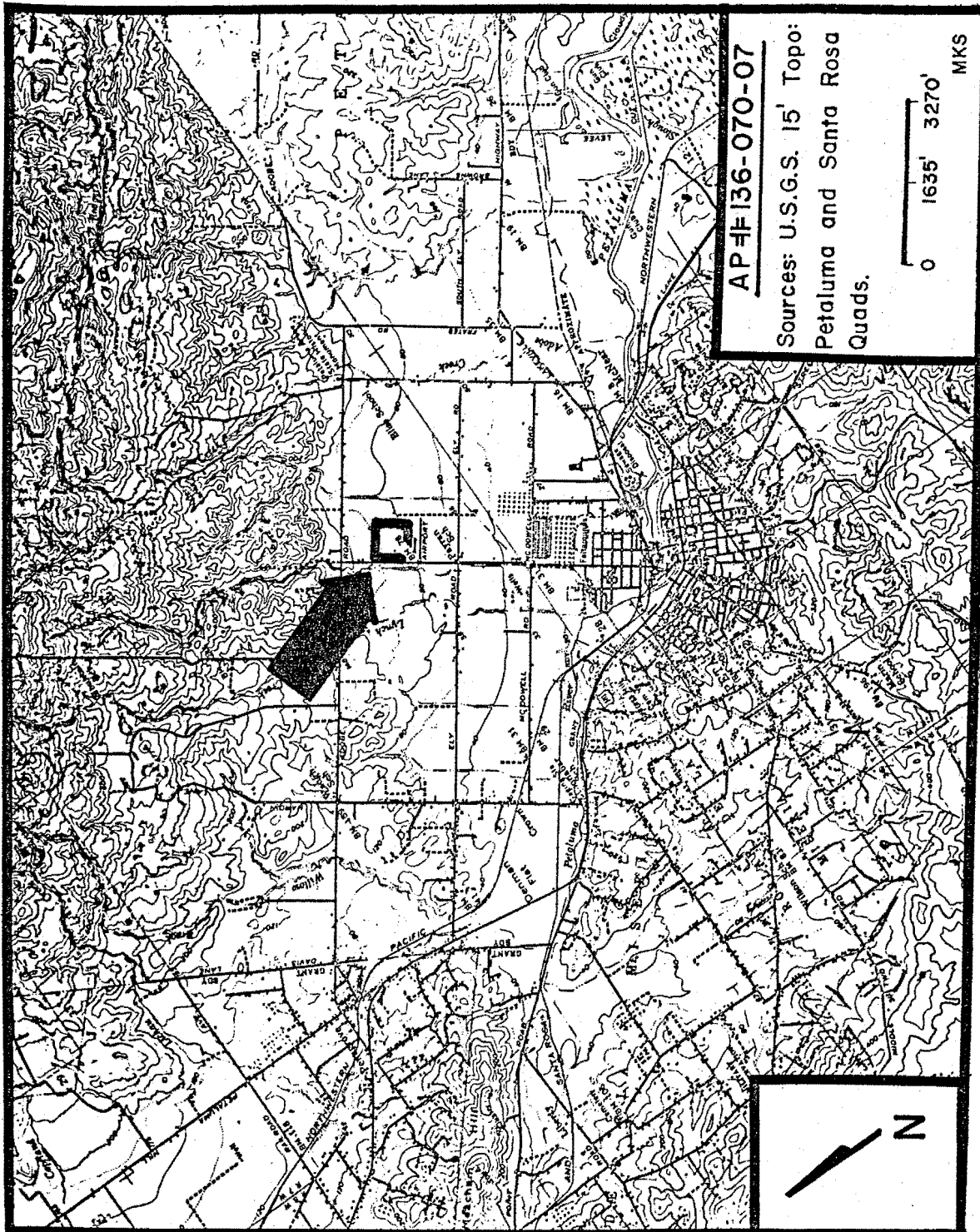
The Schlake Ranch is a 100-acre farmsite some 2.12 miles northeast of central Petaluma (Compton: 60). It is bounded on the northwest by East Washington Street, on the northeast and southeast by private

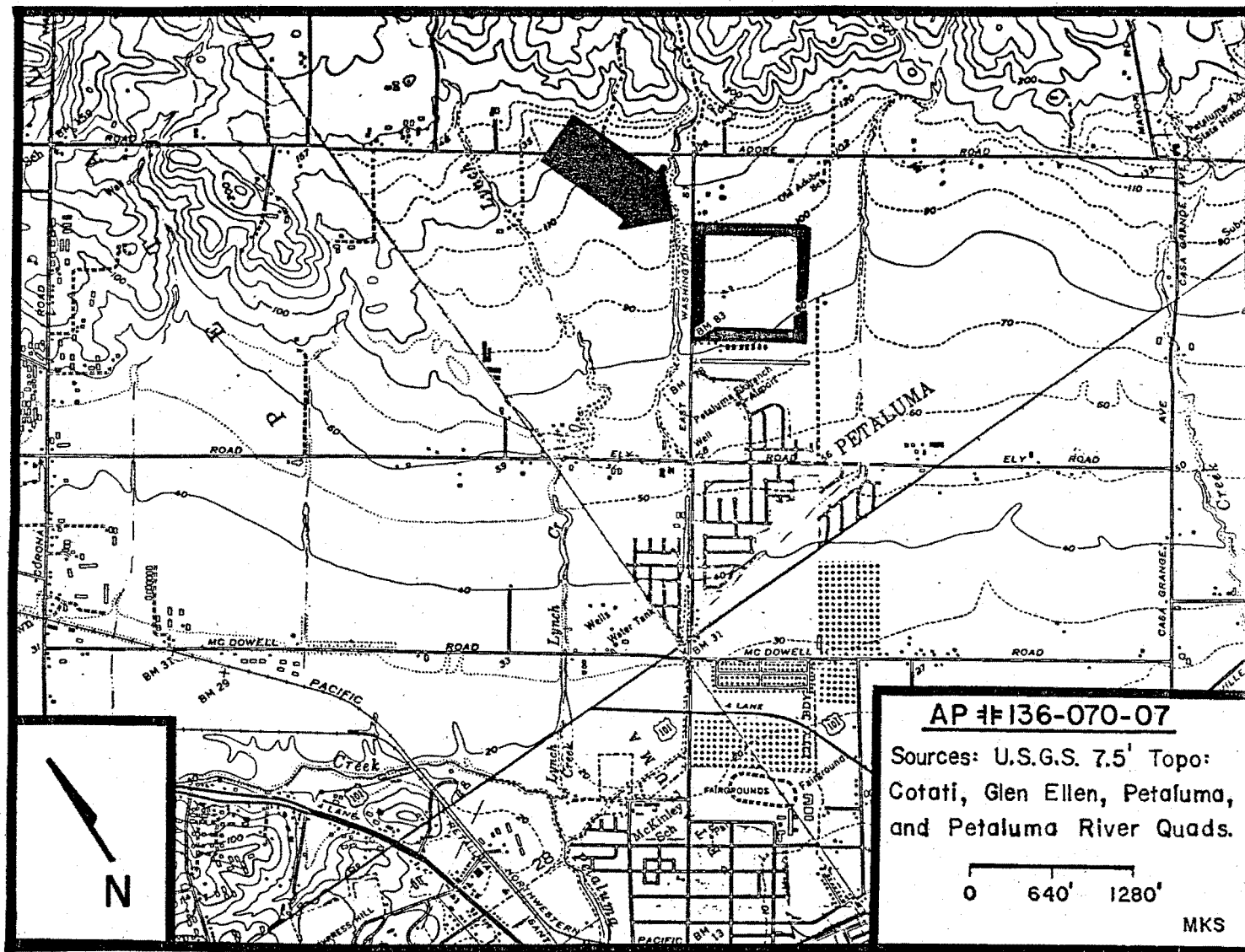
property, and on the southwest by Sky Ranch Airport. However, the proposed relocation would only impact the southerly 41.786 acres of the ranch (Petaluma, 1978c). Of the 100 acres, all but five is devoted to hay cultivation. The remaining five acres consists of a central housestead of approximately three acres and a northerly cluster of outbuildings, the latter of which would not be impacted by the proposed relocation.

Land to the northwest, through which flows intermittent Washington Creek, is devoted to hay cultivation, as is the land to the northeast, some forty acres located south of Old Adobe Road. The farmland to the southeast, once the ranch of Henry Schlake, is also used for hay cultivation. Southwest of the airport lies the subdivision residences, extending northwest and southeast, which dominate the flatlands of East Petaluma. (See Maps 1 & 2, pp 4-5)

Inclusive Dates of Study

Given the limited time permitted and the demands of the contract, research began immediately upon award of contract and was continued for a three-week period, July 31 through August 24. A site survey was conducted on August 12th and 13th. Research in primary and secondary sources, as well as oral interviews, was conducted both preceeding and following the site survey.





MAP 2

Purpose of Report

On July 31, 1981, the City of Petaluma awarded a contract for a "Petaluma Sky Ranch Relocation - Technical Proposal Historical/Cultural Analysis" to Dennis E. Harris, Professor of History at Sonoma State University. This report was prepared to remedy specified deficiencies noted regarding the original Environmental Impact report (EIR) prepared for the City of Petaluma.

On November 2, 1978, Environmental Impact Planning Corporation completed a "Final Environmental Impact Report: Petaluma Sky Ranch Airport Relocation." (Compton) Prepared for August W. Compton and Associates, that report was unanimously accepted by the Petaluma City Council on November 6, 1978 (Resolution 8368). In so doing, the Council found that report "adequate" and certified that the relocation EIR "has been completed in compliance with state and local guidelines." On April 23, 1981, the report was forwarded to the California State Historical Preservation Office (CSHPO) for review and approval.

Subsequent review, by the Department of the Interior (DOI), by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and by CSHPO resulted in the determination that the portion of the report addressing the historical significance of the site and its structures (Cramer: 3, 27, 32, 35, 38, 60-63) was inadequate. Specifically, DOI commented

The draft environmental assessment does not adequately address cultural resources concerns. It is inappropriate at this time to consider recommendations concerning relocation of the farm complex until an evaluation of the architectural, archeological, and historical integrity and significance of the resource is accomplished....

On May 26, 1981, CSHPO informed Petaluma that it could not complete its review of the environmental document...without additional information. The historic structures need to be evaluated... The evaluation should consider historic values (e.g. people, events etc.) as well as architectural values.

This report was designed and prepared specifically to address the questions raised by CSHPO and DOI and those left unanswered by EIR. Since the original EIR (Compton: 59-69) and archaeological survey of the site (Hayes) "revealed no archaeological sites" of prehistoric or historic significance to Native-Americans, this report is limited to the period of European contact.

Names, Qualifications, and Responsibilities of Investigators

DENNIS E. HARRIS, Professor of History, Sonoma State University, was Principal Investigator for the Project. A specialist in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century United States history, he currently serves as Chairman of the Sonoma County Historical Records Commission and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Historical Society. He directs both the History Department's master's program in Public Historical Studies and the Redwood Empire Social History Project (RESHP). He is currently a member of both the Board of Directors and the Steering Committee of the California Conference for the Promotion of History. Originally a specialist in U.S. diplomatic history (Ph.D., History, 1969, U.C., Santa Barbara), his research includes "America, Britain, Russia and the Second Front: Politics and Grand Strategy, 1941-1944" (1969), and studies in oral, family, and community history. He directed the research and developed the computerized data base

for "The Preston Utopian Community, 1875-1909" (1980). He developed the format and supervises the preparation of data for RESHP's analysis of nineteenth-century Sonoma County. His most recent work, "The California Census of 1852: A Methodological Note of Caution and Encouragement," is forthcoming. Harris designed the project, supervised and participated in all aspects of the investigation, and prepared the report.

CONSTANCE TUDOR BRAITO, a candidate for the Masters of Arts in History at Sonoma State University (B.A., History, SSU, 1975), served as a Graduate Research Assistant on the project. Mrs. Braitto directed the site survey and prepared the initial site structure evaluations. In 1975-76, Mrs. Braitto was Grant Assistant to the Director of the Program in Historic Preservation at Sonoma State University. Between 1976 and 1978, she served as Historical Researcher and Site Surveyor for Dan Lee Peterson, A.I.A., Santa Rosa, California. In that capacity, she worked on the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Historic Resource Surveys, National Register applications, and community Design Plans. During that period, she also worked with the Sonoma County Records Inventory Project, Sonoma State College Library, Tim Huston, Director. In 1978-79, she was employed by Theodoratus Cultural Research, Inc., as a Historical Researcher on the Warm Springs Dam Project. This year she has assisted Geri Peterson and Joy Gaskill, of Peterson Associates, in finalizing the Sonoma Coast Cultural Resource Survey.

MICHAEL K. SHAINSKY, a candidate for the Masters of Arts in Public Historical Studies at Sonoma State University (B.A., History, SSU, 1980), served as a Graduate Research Assistant on the project. Mr.

Shainsky assumed primary responsibility for the records search, the maps, and the photographs. He assisted both in the literature search and in the site survey. Shainsky has worked on Historical Research and Museum Text Consultation, Fort Ross Exhibits, for the California State Parks and Recreation Department, Museum Interpretive Division, and as an Assistant Curator and Historical Consultant for the Church of One Tree Museum, Santa Rosa, California. A specialist in the history of the Sonoma Valley, Shainsky has published five articles in Sonoma Valley Notes, a monthly publication of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society, and one in the Sonoma County Museum Foundation Quarterly. Under contract, he prepared a County Landmark Status Report for the Committee for the Preservation of the Watmaugh Road Bridge (which resulted in landmark status being designated by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors) and a report on the history of the Petaluma poultry industry for Petaluma Poultry Processors. His cartographic efforts include "Preston Community Project: Ranch, Community, Town, and Geographic Location," "Rohnert Park: Water Well Production," and "Rohnert Park: Principal Transportation Routes and Streams." A major research paper, "Immigrant to Entrepreneur: Solomon Schocken as a Reflection of Industrialization and Sonoma Valley History," should be published next spring.

LUCY DEAM KORTUM, a candidate for the Masters of Arts in Public Historical Studies at Sonoma State University (B.A., Education, Pomona College, 1950), served as a Graduate Research Assistant on the project. She assisted in the literature search and search of census records. Selected for a California Council for the Humanities' Internship for 1981-2, Mrs. Kortum has conducted research on the railroads and trans-

portation network of Sonoma County and on the utopian community at Preston, north of Cloverdale.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

The primary purpose of the historical research conducted on this project was to determine the historical significance of the site, its dwellings and outbuildings, its occupants, and the surrounding area during the periods of Spanish, Mexican, and American administration. To determine the historical significance, it was first necessary to identify and search the available secondary and primary sources pertinent to the site and its inhabitants. It was also necessary to identify and conduct oral history interviews with knowledgeable informants whose personal acquaintance with the site and/or whose specialized knowledge of the area's history would supplement the normally insufficient record provided by written sources. The site survey involved an examination of all nineteen structures and an investigation of those structures and portions of the site likely to provide information of potential historical and historical archaeological value. On the basis of the findings, maps were prepared to demonstrate the spatial and functional relationship between the various structures.

Secondary, primary, field, and oral history research was structured to provide information on the following problems:

1. Names; occupations; community activities; social, cultural, economic and political contributions; household relationships and family structure of the inhabitants during each period of site residence.

2. Land use, methods of cultivation, crop production, animal husbandry and equipment related to the site.
3. Date; materials; methods of construction; designer and builder; use; alterations, additions, and demolition; and style both at time of construction and as the dwellings' use changed over time.
4. Relationship of the site and its inhabitants to surrounding technological, economic, social, cultural and political institutions and developments.

On the basis of the research conducted in these four problem areas, the project was intended to achieve two goals:

1. An evaluation of the site considered against the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.
2. A scholarly analysis of the site for the benefit of the City of Petaluma and the research interests of scholars in such historically-related disciplines as anthropology, economics, and geography.

Literature Search

Site-specific research places peculiar demands upon traditional secondary sources. General studies of both United States and California history, of such topics as agriculture and urbanization, shed little light on a specific location and its inhabitants, unless the individuals have achieved prominence or the site was the subject of a special analysis. Harris, Shainsky and Kortum searched the general studies available through the Reuben Salazar Library, Sonoma State University,

the Sonoma County Library - particularly its California Room holdings, and the Petaluma branch library. Although considerable material exists which would permit the site to be placed in a comparative perspective, with the exception of the mission period (e.g., Bancroft; Smilie) and the site's association with Vallejo (Emparan; Murphy), nothing was found of relevance to the site or its inhabitants.

Far more valuable were the county histories. In addition to the specific historical information these provide on the county, its townships and settlements, they contain biographies and photographs of prominent residents of the county. These "mugbook" histories (Cassidy; Finley; Gregory; Menefee; Munro-Fraser; R.A. Thompson; Tuomey), published between 1873 and 1937, provided both important historical information on the surrounding area and a measure of the local prominence of the site's occupants.

Equally important to a determination of the local significance of the inhabitants were the farm and business directories (Anonymous, 1922; Grosse; Kingsbury; McKenney; Oppenheimer; Paulson; Polk-Husted; Polk; Press Democrat; Uhlhorn) published between 1874 and 1922. Their existence, and the presence or absence of listings for the site's inhabitants, provides vital information on the site for the middle half-century of the site's occupation. For the site itself, maps (Bancroft; Bowers; Goddard) and atlases (Reynolds & Proctor; T. Thompson) published between 1858 and 1897 provided clues to land ownership and the location of dwelling sites.

East Petaluma has been the subject of extensive development during the past decade. As a result, the collections of the Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University, the Planning Department of

the City of Petaluma, and the Sonoma County Planning Department revealed eight archaeological and cultural-resource studies of the area (Baldrice; Collins; Eisenma; Hayes; Origer; Origer & Roscoe; Stradford). These served both to confirm earlier research and to provide information on the area around the site.

Records Search

Site-specific and individual-level research depends primarily upon the existence of routinely generated records, records which -- irrespective of the prominence of the individuals -- exist because of the day-to-day activities of the individuals associated with the site. For both the site and its inhabitants, land records were of first importance. Deeds, grants and patents provided a complete chronology of land tenure between 1834 and the present. Mortgages, tax and assessment records, probate files and other county records provided detailed information on land use and property values. A thorough search of the Sonoma County Assessor, Supervisor, Clerk, Recorder and Tax Collector records, conducted by Shainsky, provided far more than a mere chain of title.

The other major source of primary material consulted was the census records of both California and the United States. Household size and family structure, migration patterns, value of both real and personal property were all revealed through an examination of both the manuscript population and manuscript agricultural schedules for the years between 1850 and 1900. In combination with other records, such as the Great Register, they provide a fairly complete portrait

of the owner-occupants of the site until the turn of the century.

Interviews

Knowledgeable informants identified for the purposes of this project included a Petaluma historian, a long-time owner-occupant of the site, the site's present resident tenant, and the property manager for the present owner. Oral history interviews, conducted in conformance with guidelines established by the Oral History Association, were completed by the Principal Investigator.

Mr. ED FRATINI, Petaluma's official City Historian, a member of the Board of Directors of both the Sonoma County and Petaluma Historical societies, is a retired banker who was born, raised and continues to live in Petaluma. His research into the early history of the city and his personal knowledge of the area's development during the twentieth century made him a valuable source. The ten-page transcript of his interview provides specific information on the site, on the economic development of Petaluma, and on the site's inhabitants since 1885.

DORA JURGENSEN (Mrs. Bernard E.) ELDREDGE is a granddaughter of Fred Schlake, who purchased the site in 1885. She grew up in Petaluma and resided in the farmhouse from 1949 until 1970; she continued to live in the house occasionally until 1976. The eighteen-page transcript of her interview includes information on dates of construction for many of the buildings and their use. It also describes farming practices and gives vital information on the lives and community activities of the Schlakes, Jurgensens and Eldredges.

Mr. JAMES ANDERSON, Director of Transamerica Agricultural Develop-

ment for Transamerica Airlines, has served as manager of the property since the late 1960's, both for Mrs. Eldredge and for the present owner. His responsibilities have included lease of the 95-acre hayfield and, since 1976, of the 5-acre farmstead. In addition, the Anderson family are long-time residents of the area; one of his ancestors settled near the site in 1852. That transcript contains information on land acquisition and values, historical resources, and historical land use.

Mr. RONALD POOLE, the present tenant on the farmstead, provided information on the condition of dwellings and wells, land use and other matters.

In addition to the above-named informants, the following individuals were consulted in the process of conducting research for the project:

Marley Brown	Historical Archaeologist, Sonoma State University
Nancy Clark	Archival Librarian, Santa Rosa City College
Audrey Herman	Archival Librarian, Sonoma County Public Library
Claire McCullough	Administrative Assistant, Office of the Sonoma County Recorder
Thomas M. Origer	Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University
Bernice Peterson	Sonoma County Recorder
Linda Phillips	Assistant Librarian, Sonoma County Public Library
William Pitchess	Librarian, Santa Rosa City College
Warren Salmons	Petaluma City Planning Department
Shirley Silver	Linguistics Specialist, Professor of Anthropology, Sonoma State University

Scott Thompson

Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma
State University

Barry Urdang

Photographer

Maps

As a result of the literature and records searches, both contemporary (Compton; Petaluma; Sonoma County Assessor; Sonoma County Recorder; USGS) and historical maps were located. These were prepared as site-specific without altering the originals. In addition, two maps were specially prepared for the project. One, a farmstead map, was prepared to show the spatial and functional relationships which exist among the nineteen dwellings on the property. The second, a housestead map, shows in greater detail the size and functional relationship of the dwellings impacted by the project. Both were prepared after an analysis of existing maps and the measurement of the dwellings and site at the time of the field survey.

Field Survey

The field survey of the 41.786 impacted acres of the 100-acre Jurgensen Ranch was conducted on the basis of a two-day visual analysis of the ranchhouse and eighteen ranch buildings, August 12th and 13th. Historical information provided by primary and secondary research and oral history interviews furnished background data. Evaluation was made of the ranch setting, noting natural features and the built environment immediately surrounding the ranch. The five-acre farmstead, which is defined by large trees planted as windbreaks, was then divided into two visual elements: the housestead, enclosed by a picket fence,

and the farmstead, which consists of buildings set outside the ranchhouse compound. The separation between the housestead and farmstead correspond to the division of labor on the ranch. Those activities related to the processing of food and the needs of the household were conducted in and near outbuildings within the housestead area (see map 8). Those activities related to the production of grains and hay and to the raising of livestock were conducted in and near the buildings in the area referred to as the farmstead (see map 9).

The buildings were evaluated in accordance with both the National Register criteria (36CFR60.6) and those of CSHPD (DPR 523). Evaluation and analysis of the buildings was made noting style, condition, building materials, identification with historical period, and use of structure. Photographs documenting the major buildings of the ranch complex were taken and measurements of the fenceline and housestead buildings were completed.

The buildings were viewed as to their importance both as a unique representative of an architectural style and in association with major historical events and/or people that have made significant contributions to the past. The conclusion of the field survey was that the Jurgensen Ranch complex represents a distinguishable entity of local significance.

THE SCHLAKE RANCH: LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE, 1823 - 1981

Introduction

The prehistory of the Petaluma Valley is associated with the seasonal sites of the hunters, gatherers and fishers, organized in social units of extended families and aggregates of extended families, who occupied central California (Origer & Roscoe: 2). Not until 1823, after Spain had lost control of Mexico, would an attempt be made to establish a European settlement in the area. A decade later, Vallejo began development of his Petaluma Rancho. From 1834 until sale of the site in 1854, the fortunes of east Petaluma were tied to the cattle, wheat and other activities associated with the Petaluma Adobe. Between 1855 and 1882, the site was a portion of much larger grain and hay farms. Tied to Petaluma's growth as a market town and entrepot for San Francisco and the Bay area, the farm produced wheat, barley and hay for market. The earliest dwellings on the site appear to date from the period 1855 - 1864. Separated from a larger parcel in 1882, the 80-acre portion of Lot 250 would remain an owner-occupied, medium-sized farm for most of the remainder of its history. Its owners engaged in subsistence agriculture with a sufficient surplus of eggs, grains and hay to provide the cash necessary for a middle-class existence. In the 1880's and '90's, additional dwellings were added to the farmstead. Beginning in 1917, with the first automobile, mechanization began to affect both the site and its future. Between 1925 and 1949, both the farm machinery and the water system were "motorized". Three

sets of owners, the Greens, Schlakes and Eldredges, participated in community life as members of the boards of the local school districts and those of agriculturally-oriented organizations. Since 1969, although the acreage remains in hay cultivation, the farmstead itself was first abandoned and then leased to tenants.

Spanish Conquest, Mexican Independence and U.S. Acquisition

Although the region north of San Francisco Bay was nominally part of Spain's Mexican empire, there is no documented European contact with the area of East Petaluma prior to 1823. On June 26th of that year, the Franciscan padre Jose Altamira camped near the future site of the Petaluma Adobe. Exploring for a mission site north of San Francisco, Altamira described the Petaluma Valley as a broad, fertile plain, but one lacking the water needed for a mission (Simile: 6, 12; Cassiday: 12). Moving east, he found a suitable site in Sonoma for the establishment of the Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma.

Ten years later, in the spring of 1833, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo was sent north from San Francisco by Governor Figueroa to investigate two problems -- the encroachment of the Russians into the northern reaches of Alta California and troubles between the Indians and the mission padres. Passing through the valley on his way to Bodega, Vallejo returned in the fall with fifty settlers. It was these settlers who planted the first wheat grown in the valley, yielding ten bushels when harvested (Bancroft: III, 255; Finley: 53; Emparan: 402).

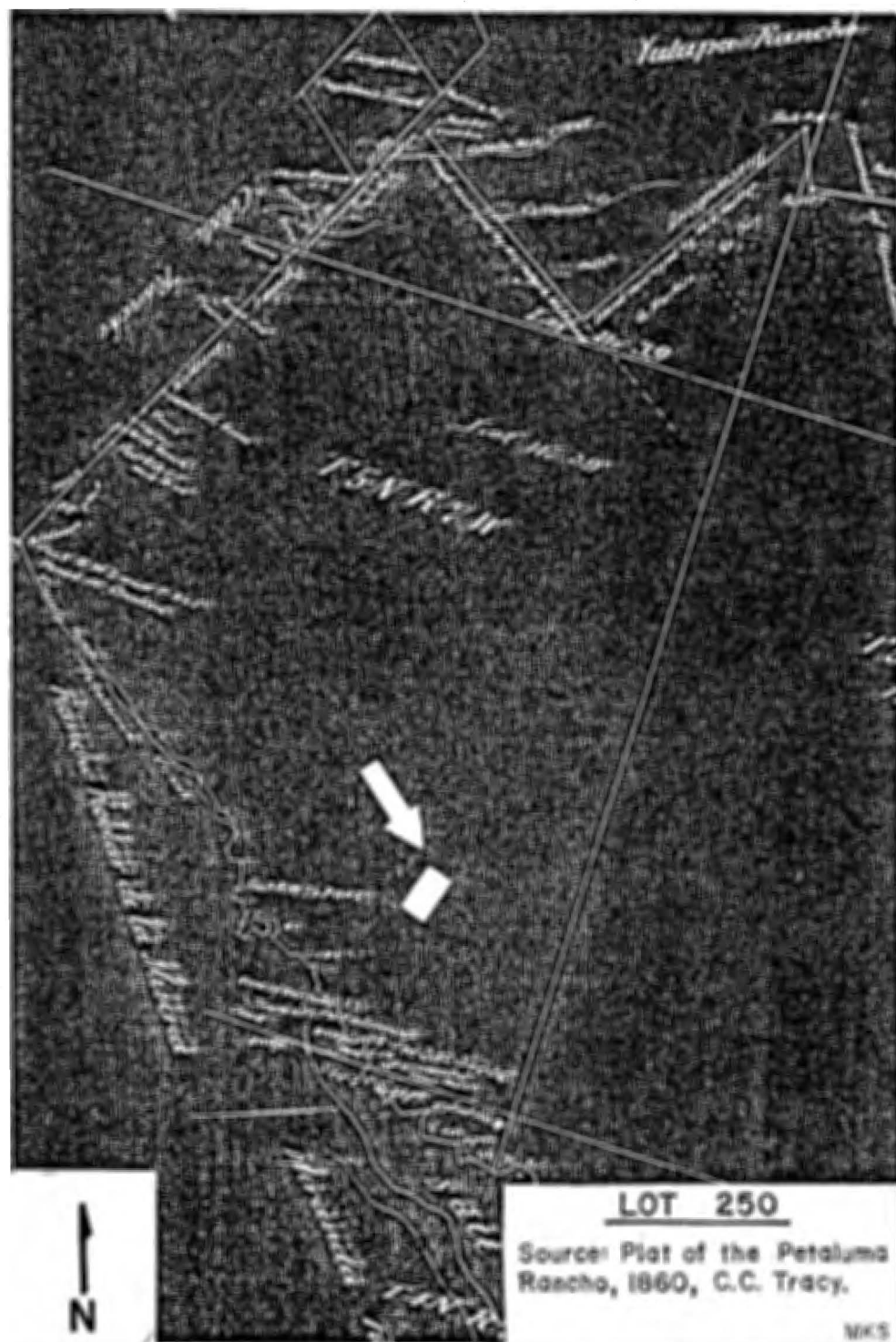
In 1834, Vallejo was assigned two tasks -- supervision of the secularization of the mission at Sonoma and colonization of the frontier

to establish a barrier against further Russian encroachment (Cassidy: 39; Parmalee: 91). In June, Figueroa granted Vallejo a 44,280-acre tract on which he began construction of what is now known as the Petaluma Adobe (Gebhardt: 23; Smilie: 50; Emparan: 19). (see Map 3) Constructed over a ten-year period, from 1834 to 1844 (Vallejo; Gebhardt: 1), the Adobe served as headquarters for the vast cattle, grain, and other productions of the Rancho. However, the Vallejos' family home would remain in Sonoma (Finley: II, 209). Located 2.55 miles northeast of the project site (USGS 7.5' 1954: Glen Ellen Quad.), the Adobe remains a focal point for the history of the area.

The Petaluma Rancho grew to become a major producer of grains. From the first harvest of 1833, production increased to 72,000 Spanish bushels of wheat and barley by 1843 (Gregory: 174). In 1844, Vallejo received an additional grant of 22,140 acres. At its height, as many as 50,000 cattle, 6,000 horses, and 24,000 sheep grazed on a vast estate (Chipman: 24-5; Davis: 29) which occupied the Petaluma Valley and the west slope of Sonoma Mountain (Gregory: 174). Wool was brought from Sonoma to be woven into cloth, carpets and blankets (Finley: 209). Soap, farm implements and nails were manufactured at the Adobe. Leather was tanned for saddles, harnesses, boots and shoes (Gregory: 174).

Offsetting the impression of intense agricultural and manufacturing activity, not a single additional residence existed in the area (Cassidy: 109). An 1846 traveler "crossed a ridge of hills and entered the fertile and picturesque Valley of Petaluma Creek." He noted Vallejo's "extensive rancho" with its "very large house" and large herds of cattle" but no other sign of settlement (Bryant: 338). An 1849 visitor dismissed

MAP 3



the valley as "an Indian ranch [sic]" (Taylor: 2).

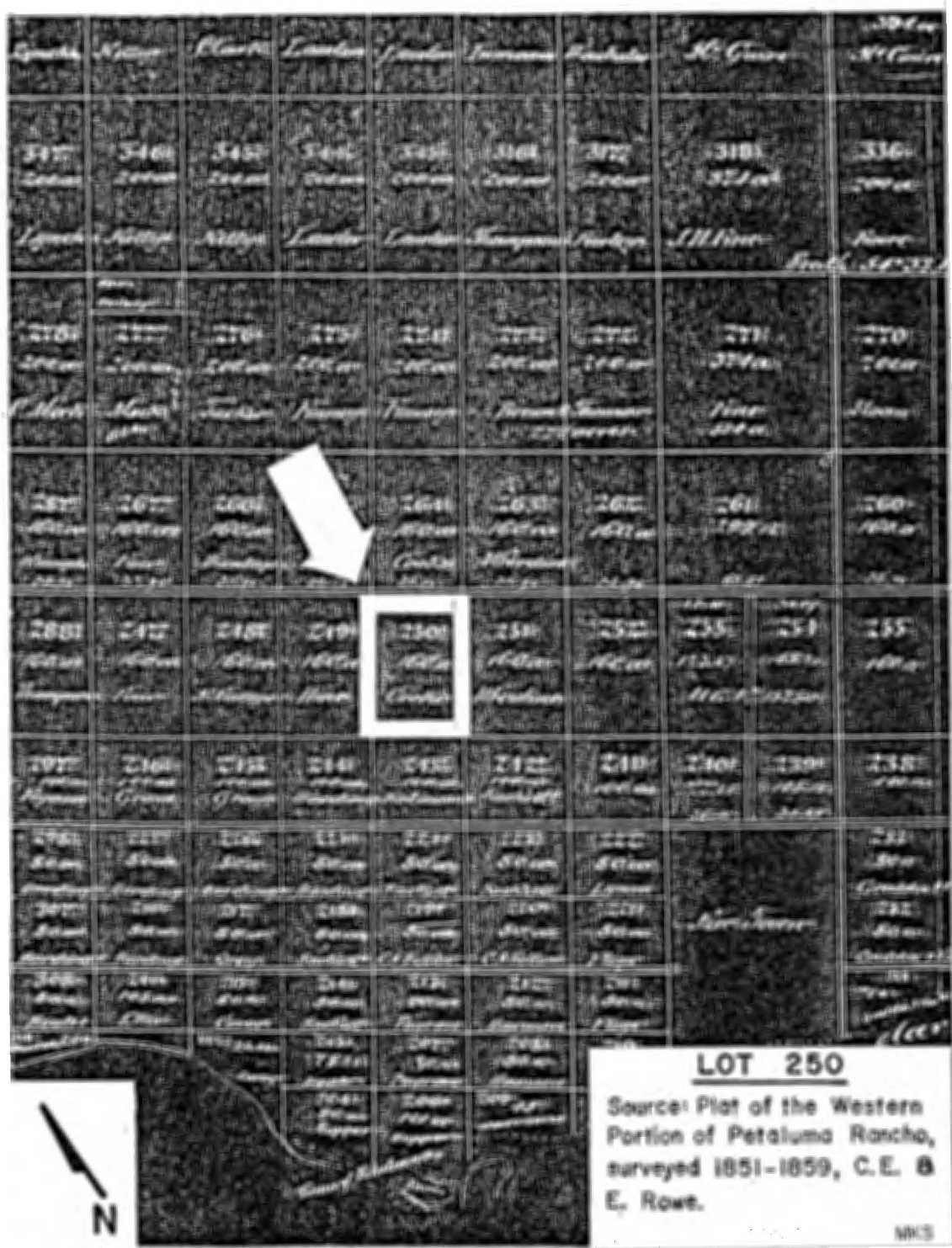
The valley's tranquility and Vallejo's fortunes were both disturbed by the Mexican War, American acquisition, and the California gold rush. Petaluma "sprung to existence" in 1851 (Munro-Fraser: 70), becoming the shipping point for Green Valley and Bodega produce (R. Thompson: 18). Although Vallejo served as a member of the Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849 and as Senator from the Sonoma District to the first State Legislature (Cassidy: 75; Gregory: 249), he found himself economically threatened from two sides -- the squatters who moved onto his land while American title was being litigated (Smilie: 108; Nixon: 47) and his battles over the location of the state capitol. Both grain production and livestock decreased significantly in the three years following the Mexican Cession (U.S. Census, 1850b: 47; California Census, 1852b: I-15, II-36). The herd of 50,000 cattle was reduced to 5,000 in 1850 and 1,000 in 1852. No grain was reported for either year.

Two miles north of the site, Lorenzo Waugh settled on Vallejo's land and, in the spring of 1853, built a redwood house (Emparan: 51-2), becoming one of four or five farmers on the plain east of Petaluma (R. Thompson: 24).

In the summer of 1854, Vallejo sold the site, along with the remainder of Lot 250 and Lot 251, to Martin E. Cooke. (See Map 4) Cooke's 320-acre parcel represented less than .3% of the General's original ten-league grant.

Cooke was born in Vermont but came to California from New York prior to 1850 (U.S. Census, 1850a: 7). He was a neighbor of Vallejo's (Ibid.), a suitor for the hand of Vallejo's daughter Natalia (Emparan:

MAP 4



303), and a political, legal, and financial associate of the General. An active Democratic politician, he succeeded Vallejo and served as Sonoma's state senator in the second and third sessions (California State Legislature: 195; R. Thompson: 18; Gregory: 249). While in the Senate he managed the bill establishing the town of Vallejo as the state capitol (Emparan: 79-80, 303). Upon his death in 1857, at the age of thirty-five, Vallejo described him as "an intimate friend" whose "conduct and good management made me think I was going to have good luck in my financial affairs" (Emparan: 304). So close was Cooke to the Vallejos that he was buried in the family cemetery (Emparan: 264).

Cooke's purchase of the land in east Petaluma (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds Bk. N, p. 42) was only one of a number of land investments made by the Sonoma lawyer. However, it was not to be one of his wisest purchases. Although Cooke had paid Vallejo \$3,600 for the land, he sold it less than eighteen months later for only \$2,240. Given his willingness to accept a loss of \$4.25 an acre, it appears unlikely that any improvements were made to the property while it was his (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds, Bk. B, p. 55).

The Alberding Ranch, 1855 - 1859

The beneficiary of Cooke's bad investment was Frederick Alberding. On 28 November 1855, the farmer acquired the 320 acres of Lots 250 and 251 for \$7.00 an acre.

Born in Hanover, Germany, around 1823, Alberding immigrated to the United States and later married a woman from Illinois. Fred and

Rosannah had two children while living on the farm they purchased from Cooke -- Mary A., born in 1857, and Fred A. B., born in 1859 (U.S. Census, 1860a: 85).

Alberding-expanded his east Petaluma farmstead, and then, in the fall of 1859, sold Lot 250 and and 130 acres of Lot 264 to George D. Green. (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds, Bk. 9, pp. 389-90) The price, \$7,250, represented a substantial profit for the prosperous farmer since Green paid him \$25.00 an acre for the land. Given the 350% profit, it is possible that Alberding was responsible for the first dwellings on Lot 250. The style of the original farmhouse and its first addition, as well as that of the oldest outbuildings would be consistent with this.

But Alberding also owned the property during a period when the greatest and most rapid growth within Sonoma County in both population and wealth occurred in Petaluma (R. Thompson: 20). Petaluma became the primary shipping point for the county; the area north and south of Petaluma grew quickly as land was brought under cultivation. Until 1857, the year the city was incorporated, there had been no connection between east and west Petaluma except "a rickety bridge, which crossed above the city." A drawbridge was constructed across Petaluma Creek at the foot of Washington Street, and the area immediately east began to be developed quickly (Ibid: 56-9).

The land sold to Green was not, or at least did not continue to be, the Alberdings' residence in Vallejo Township. The 1860 U.S. Census shows the Alberdings with 350 acres of improved land having an estimated cash value of \$10,000 and \$200 in farm implements.

Livestock on the 1860 Alberding farm, which no longer included Lot 250, was limited to that sufficient to meet the family's needs and produce a small amount of butter (300 pounds) for market: 8 horses, 8 swine, 1 mule, 11 milch cows and 20 other cattle -- livestock worth \$1,200. Primary economic activity on the Alberding ranch was the raising of grain. In 1860, Alberding reported 1,200 bushels of wheat, 600 of barley, and 250 tons of hay (U.S. Census, 1860b: 12).

To work the land and harvest the crops, Alberding employed ten male laborers and two female servants. The employees were a microcosm of the migration of the period; 1 from his birthplace and another two from elsewhere in Germany; one each from Scotland, Tennessee and Wisconsin; four from Maine and the two women servants from Ireland (U.S. Census, 1860a: 85).

Although his improvements to the site and his possible contribution to the material remains cannot be determined, Alberding clearly used the land to advance his, and his family's prosperity. Since he is unmentioned by the sources consulted, it does not appear that he made any other contributions to the surrounding area and the nearby community of Petaluma.

The Green Ranch, 1859 - 1882

For the next twenty-two years, the site would be part of the large farm holdings of George Douglas Green. Although the Greens appear never to have resided on the property, it became part of their 450-acre grain-producing lands. Again, it is not possible to date the construction of any of the buildings with precision, but there is

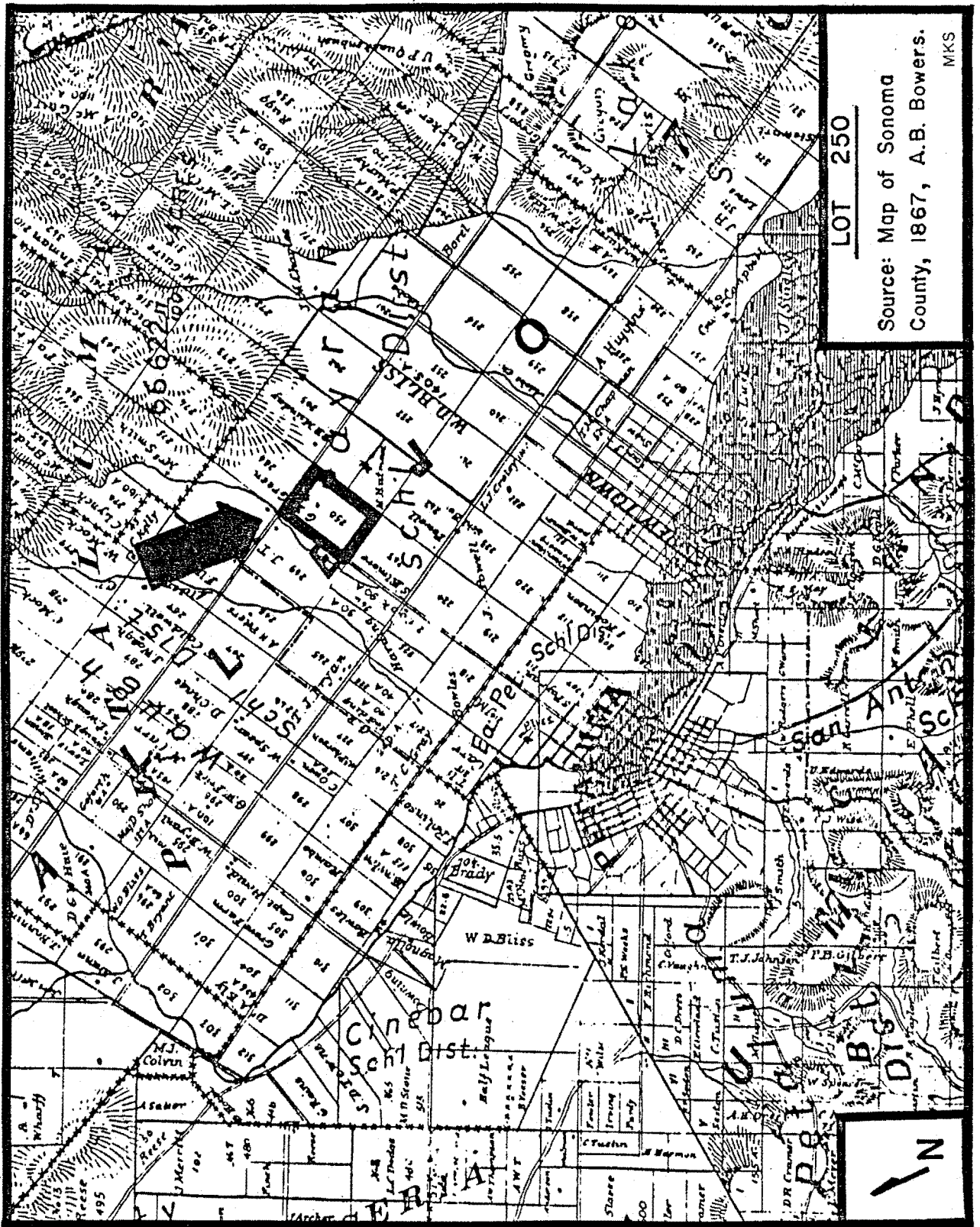
no doubt that the oldest of them must have been constructed prior to the termination of Green's ownership in 1882.

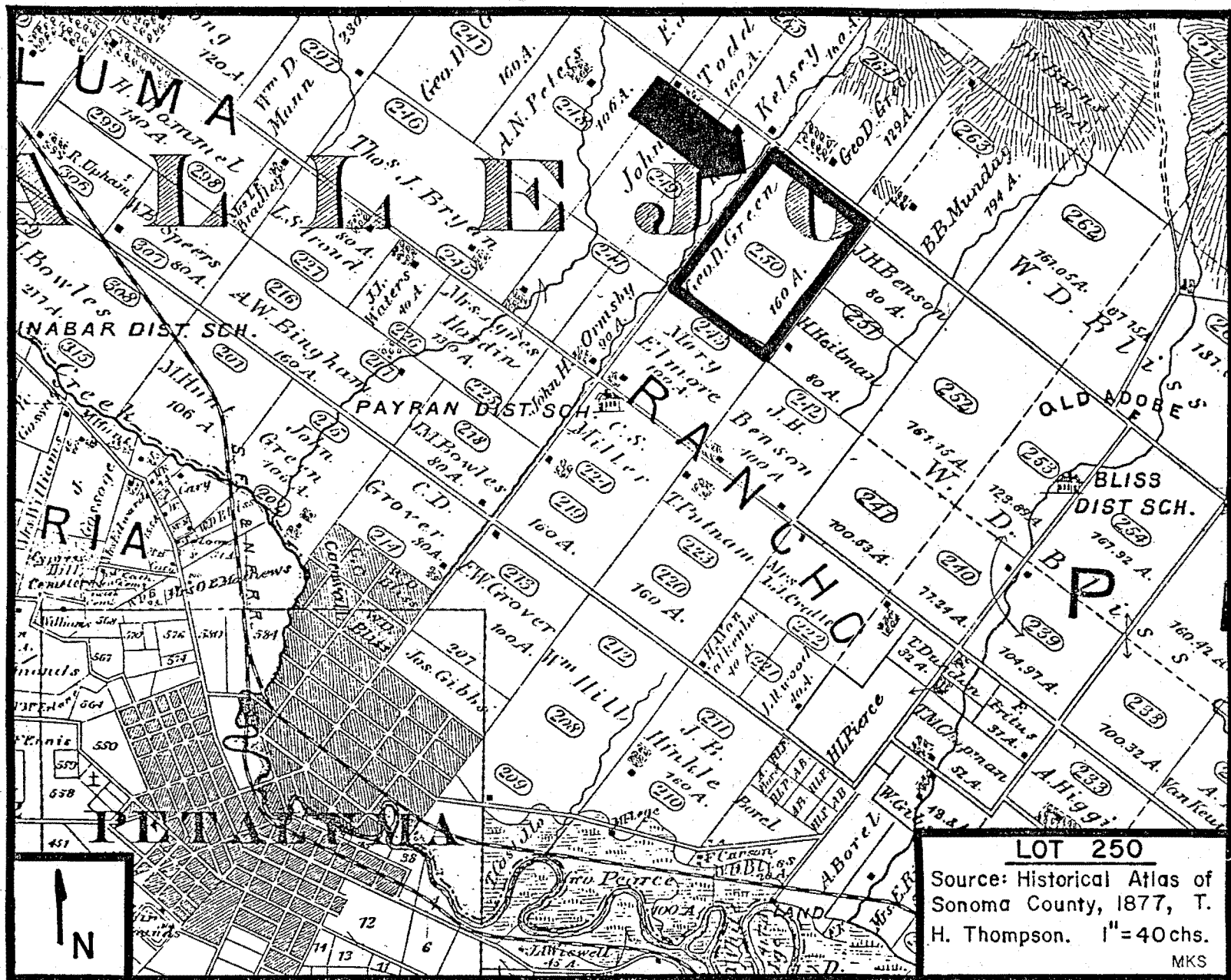
The Green family housesite was located on the 130-acre portion of Lot 264. Mortgages negotiated by Green in the '60's and '70's, in which Lot 250 was the collateral, refer to the site as land which Green used, occupied, and possessed "but not where he resides." (Sonoma County Recorder, Mortgages, Bk. F. p. 637, and Bk. H, p. 438). By 1877, indeed, the site had become part of a much larger farm as Green added the 160 acres of Lot 247 to his possessions (Ibid., Bk. 22, p. 52-4. Also, compare Bowers' 1867 Map of Sonoma County, Map 5, with Thompson's 1877 atlas, Map 6).

During the 1860's, it appears that the Greens occupied themselves with the responsibilities of developing the lands and raising a family (U.S. Census, 1870a: 1; U.S. Census, 1880a: 9; Sonoma County Clerk, Probate Files, Reel 60, Case #1968). Although a registered voter from at least 1867 on (Sonoma County Clerk, Great Register, 1867: 9; 1871: 26; 1872: 24; 1873: 24; 1875: 25; 1879: 21; 1880: 23), Green apparently played no other role in the political life of the community.

Green's most important contribution to the site during this period was his request to the County Board of Supervisors in 1868 that a road be run from the city limits to his home on Old Adobe Road (Sonoma County Board of Supervisors: Bk. 5, p. 364). Although Bowers' 1867 map shows a road leading from the drawbridge to Old Adobe Road, this may have been nothing more than a pathway utilized by East Petaluma farmers. The new road, East Washington Street, separated Lot 250 from the adjoining northwesterly Lot 249 and Washington Creek. By doing so, it also provided access to the city for the Greens and other farmers located in the foothills and flatlands near Old Adobe and Ely roads.

MAP 5





Once built by the city, the dirt road, later graveled each summer to make the adobe soil more manageable (Fratini interview), not only provided access to the local Petaluma marketing facilities but also an easier means of transporting goods for transshipment by steamer to San Francisco. In addition, it provided a change of orientation for dwellings constructed, altered or to which additions were made. The original site farmhouse opens to the northeast and the hillside beyond. The first addition, with its "little livingroom that's almost a hallway," is oriented toward the east (Eldredge interview). Only the two-story Schlake addition faces what was to become the major artery between East Petaluma and the city.

By 1870, Green's large ranch, including 287 acres of improved land, was valued at \$8,000. In addition, the Greens had some \$400 in farm implements and \$1,030 in livestock. It was apparently Green who first used the foothills directly northeast of the site to raise horses; in 1870, he had 13, far more than required for farm operations. However, most of his income was derived from the 1,400 bushels of spring wheat grown on the property, supplemented by some corn (150 bushels), barley (400 bushels), and animals sold for slaughter (U.S. Census, 1870b: 1).

As early as 1862, the area around the "thriving villages" of Petaluma and Santa Rosa was already described as "rich farming lands" (Brewer: 259; T. Thompson: 20). Travelers heading north from Petaluma passed "along the sides of interminable fields of corn and grain" (Hutchings: 225), and the Petaluma area had already established itself as one of the three principal wheat producing areas in the county (Meneffee: 261). The "very rich farming district" enjoyed a natural

advantage over other wheat producing areas: Petaluma in 1874 was the shipping point for the produce of both Sonoma County and the surrounding counties of Marin, Lake and Mendocino (Paulson: 87, 94). In addition to the water-borne commerce, beginning in 1870, Petaluma was the southern terminus for the railroad constructed to the north (Munro-Fraser: 85; Bancroft: VII, 583-4).

Once established, Green became active in community affairs. He served as a member of the Sonoma-Marin District Agricultural Society, organized to promote the agricultural products of the area. A director between 1874 and 1876, he also served as one of the society's two vice-presidents in the latter year (Cassidy: 180). While he served on the board of directors, the City of Petaluma sold land to the society for "the agricultural park and grounds." (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds, Bk. 49, pp. 623-5)

By 1880, George, his second wife, and their family were prosperous members of the community. Their farm, increased to 450 acres of improved land, was worth \$22,000. Enlarged, the Green ranch remained one primarily devoted to grains -- 250 acres of wheat (5,000 bushels) and 50 acres of barley (1,500 bushels) -- and hay (100 acres). Sheep and chickens provided additional income (U.S. Census, 1880a: 9; U.S. Census, 1880b:4).

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the Green period was the financial arrangements required to continue farm production. During the rain season, October through May, Green regularly mortgaged Lot 250 to obtain cash. Grain, sown in late winter or early spring, would be harvested in late summer, before the rains began, and the mortgage would be repaid. (Munro-Fraser: 24; Shipley: 3)

Green, and Alberding before him, began farming in Petaluma when

money was scarce, particularly in the newly settled areas of the Far West. Mortgages from San Francisco lenders were at high interest rates. Alberding's only mortgage had been at a rate of 30% per annum (Sonoma County Recorder, Mortgages, Bk. B, pp. 538-9). When Green bought the property, he had to borrow at 24%. (Ibid: Bk. D, pp. 312-4) During the '60's, and despite the inflationary pressures of the Civil War, interest rates declined to 18% (e.g., Ibid: Bk. H, pp. 438-9; Bk. R, pp. 36-9). With the growth of Petaluma came local financial resources and lower rates. In the '70's, interest rates, now charged by the local banks to whom Green had turned, decreased first to 12% and then 10% (e.g., Ibid: Bk. 6, pp. 172-4; Bk. 25, pp. 211-4). Until his death in 1890, the Pennsylvania-born farmer would continue to enjoy the advantages of hard-currency, tight money, and decreasing interest rates which typified those years (see Table 1).

The Healy Ranch, 1882 - 1885

On 6 February 1882, Green sold the southwesterly half of Lot 250 to Maurice J. Healy. Healy, an Irish immigrant who moved to the Petaluma Valley from Contra Costa County (Sonoma County Clerk, Great Register 1884: 37), purchased the eighty-acre ranch for \$6,000 (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds Bk. 78, pp. 147-9) and negotiated a loan from the Mutual Relief Association of Petaluma for half the purchase price (Ibid., Mortgages, Bk. H, p. 552). The ranch, with its improved acreage and farmstead -- including the original cottage and its addition, the water tower, barn, and various outbuildings -- was purchased for \$37.50 an acre, \$12.50 more than Green had paid for it two decades earlier. However, the naturalized American citizen sold the ranch

Table 1

INTEREST RATES CHARGED FOR MORTGAGES ON LOT 250

Date	Owner	Amount of Mortgage	Annual Percentage Rate
15 Apr 1858	Alberding	\$ 1,200.00	30%
22 Nov 1860	Green	4,000.00	24
19 May 1864	Green	2,000.00	15
28 Apr 1865	Green	2,000.00	18
30 Jan 1871	Green	2,500.00	18
1 Dec 1874	Green	3,400.00	12
18 Jan 1878	Green	3,800.00	9
29 Jan 1879	Green	8,987.93	10
27 Feb 1880	Green	5,366.50	10
18 Nov 1880	Healy	3,000.00	9
13 Dec 1884	Healy	1,000.00	9
4 Feb 1887	Schlake	2,000.00	5
3 Feb 1892	Schlake	2,000.00	7
25 Feb 1911	Schlake	3,000.00	6

Compiled from Sonoma County Recorder,
Mortgages and Chattel Mortgages

just three years later.

The Schlake Ranch, 1885 - 1949

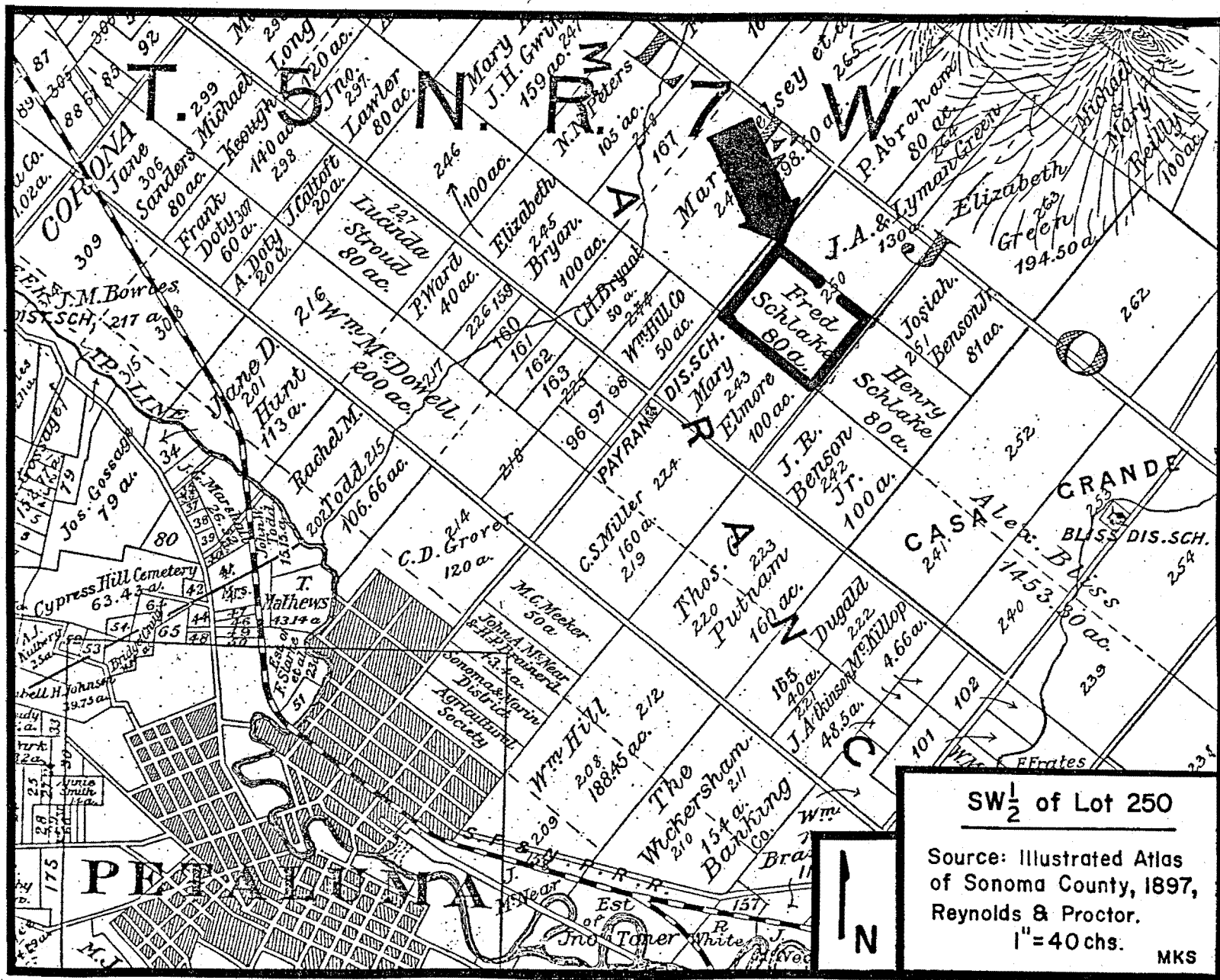
The Schlake (originally pronounced "šlakə" but anglicized to "šleyk") period contains a number of ironies. First, although the site had five previous owners -- including the historic Vallejo and his associate Cooke -- its historic name is taken from the individual who purchased the land thirty years after it had first been cultivated. Second, although Schlakes and descendants of Schlakes would reside on the property for the next eighty-five years, both the secondary and primary sources consulted reveal less about these owners than about several of the previous owners. Third, the two common names for the site -- the Jurgensen Ranch and the Eldredge Farm -- are derived from a matrilineal transfer of the property. Fourth, despite the declining importance of grain and hay production to the Petaluma economy as late as 1879, 120 acres of Lot 250 was devoted to wheat production (Sonoma County Recorder, Chattel Mortgages, Bk. C, pp. 424-9) and the rise of the poultry and egg industry around the turn of the century (Anonymous, 1906: 12; Polk-Husted, 1909: 211), the ranch and the surrounding farmlands remained devoted primarily to hay production (Eldredge interview; Fratini interview). And, lastly, although Sonoma County in general and the Petaluma area in particular gained population with the massive influx of "new immigrants" from southern and eastern Europe, the Schlakes -- like the Alberdings -- were of German descent.

The purchaser of the property in 1885, Frederick Henry Schlake, was one of three brothers to immigrate to the United States. Frederick

was born in Schleswig-Holstein in 1834. His oldest brother, Henry Frederick, came to California during the gold rush. Henry returned to Germany, and, in 1854, Frederick, Henry, and the third brother, Christian, and their families came to California via the Panama route. Christian headed for the Sierras, finding employment in one of the gold mines near Placerville. The other brothers settled themselves on farms, Henry in Marin County and Frederick in Alameda County. A short time later, Christian abandoned the gold fields and bought a farm in Marin near his brother. (Tuomey: II, 333; Sonoma County Clerk, Great Register, 1879: 48; Ibid., 1884: 75; Ibid., 1888: 71)

All three brothers eventually moved to Sonoma County. In 1872, Christian sold his Marin farm and purchased 475 acres in Green Valley, near Graton. The "raw land" was cleared of timber and brush, and the land devoted to orchards and vineyards (Tuomey: II, 334). Later, Henry sold his Marin farm and purchased the southwesterly half of Lot 251, the land adjacent to the southeastern boundary of the site (see Map 7). Informed by Henry of the availability of the Healy property, Frederick joined his brother in May of 1885 (Eldredge interview).

Fred Schlake purchased the five-acre farmstead, the remaining seventy-five acres and the crops Healy had planted that spring, \$7,000 for the property and \$300 for the crops (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds, Bk. 96, pp. 327-9). At \$87.50 an acre, this represented a clear profit of \$50.00 per acre on the ranch Healy had purchased only three years earlier. The purchase price raises some questions about the dating of the early farm dwellings. The profit of nearly 240% would suggest that Healy had made significant improvements to the ranch (see Table 2). Yet, the style and construction suggest that the buildings acquired



by Schlake were built prior to 1882. To add to the problem, it is known that Green resided elsewhere but employed farm labor (U.S. Census, 1870b: 1; Ibid., 1880b: 4). Alberding also apparently resided, not on Lot 250, but on a residence near Green on Lot 263 (see maps 4, 5, and 6). In addition, original sketches and drawings prepared for the 1877 Thompson atlas apparently included a sketch of the housestead on Lot 250 (Anderson interview). Unfortunately, these have not been located.

Table 2
LAND VALUES

Date	Purchaser	# Acres	Price per Acre
10 Jun 1854	Cooke	320	\$ 11.25
28 Nov 1855	Alberding	320	\$ 7.00
5 Oct 1859	Green	290	\$ 25.00
6 Feb 1882	Healy	80	\$ 37.50
14 May 1885	Schlake	80	\$ 87.50

Fred, his wife Sophia, and their three children -- Elizabeth, born in 1871; Frederick Henry, Jr., born in 1872; and Christian Frederick, born in 1876 -- soon began to improve their new ranch. A two-story, Gothic Revival, four-room section facing East Washington Street was added to the cottage. The "New Barn" was built. And, despite the fact that the Schlake Ranch did not make a major contribution to the increasing dominance of poultry and egg production, which by 1909 would contribute more than one-half the agricultural wealth of

Petaluma (Polk-Husted, 1909: 211-2; Anonymous, 1903: 12-14; Press Democrat, 1913: 175), poultry-related dwellings were built.

With the decline of wheat in the area, hay became and remained the major cash crop on the site. Supplemental income was derived both from the poultry business and from a small dairy (Eldredge interview; Fratini interview). But, even with the 20 acres added to the property in 1903 (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds, Bk. 207, p.348), the Schlake Ranch remained a medium-sized farm. With the orchards, vegetable plot, swine and sheep, it provided both the subsistence needs of the family and sufficient cash for the purchase of farm machinery and other manufactured or processed goods typical of middle-class farm families (Eldredge interview; Fratini interview).

With easy access to Petaluma and rural free delivery, established in 1899 and - by 1900 - serving 450 families within a seven-mile radius of Petaluma (Anonymous, 1903: 10; Anonymous, 1906: 16), the Schlakes could enjoy the advantages of small-town life at the turn of the century. But they could also not escape the entrepreneurial activities associated with American industrialization.

In 1908, the Petaluma Valley experienced the first of two attempts to develop oil and gas in the area. Fred and his two sons granted the Petaluma Oil and Development Company a two-year lease to explore the 100-acre parcel (Sonoma County Recorder, Leases, Bk. K, pp. 306-7). Apparently nothing was found, for the company did not exercise its option to renew the lease in 1910. In the 1920's, a much more intensive oil boom would strike the valley. Over 3,000 acres was leased by nine companies. Several wells were drilled, and both oil and natural gas were found, but never enough to justify commercial

production (California State Mining Bureau: 327ff.; Fratini interview).

It was shortly after this that the farm itself began to be modernized. Fred Schlake, senior, died in 1909. The farm passed first to his widow (Sonoma County Recorder, Deeds, Bk. 261, pp. 108-9) and then to her two sons (Ibid., Bk. 267, pp. 373-4). Christian, who apparently had no interest in farming, sold his share to his brother (Ibid., Bk. 279, p. 225), and in 1911 the eldest son became sole owner of the site. Sophia's life estate, of course, continued until her death in 1920 (Ibid., Bk. 381, pp. 346-7).

It was the son who introduced modern machinery to the ranch. The first Schlake automobile, a 1917 Chevrolet roadster, freed the family from the horse-drawn wagon they had previously used to ride to town. It also resulted in the addition of a small garage at the west corner of the houstead complex (Eldredge interview). A tractor was purchased for the farm, and a tractor shed added to the "New Barn." Around 1930, the family "retired" the old outhouse, built a septic system southwest of the water tower, and converted one of the bedrooms in the "first addition" to a modern bath (Eldredge interview). About the same time, the original water system was abandoned. A new well, motorized pump, and pump house were built.

Except for the addition of these conveniences and electricity, the farm changed little during these years. Both it and the surrounding area had stabilized. The value of the land, assessed for tax purposes at \$500 an acre in 1912, changed virtually not at all (see Table 3). The farm remained primarily a producer of hay for the surrounding dairy industry. A few eggs were grown for market, and the farm had

Table 3

TAX ASSESSMENTS

Date	Owner	No. of Acres	Assessed Value **	Tax Rate	Assessed Value per acre **
1858	Alberding	640	<u>\$ 8065.00</u>	\$ 1.50	<u>\$ 12.60</u>
		land.....	7040.00		11.00
		pers. prop...	525.00		.78
		improvements.	500.00		.82
1912	Sophia Schlake	80	<u>\$ 5750.00</u>	\$ 1.60	<u>\$ 71.88</u>
		land.....	4000.00		50.00
		pers. prop...	850.00		11.25
		improvements.	900.00		10.63
1912	Fred Schlake	20	<u>\$ 1000.00</u>	\$ 1.60	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
		land only			
1925	Fred Schlake	80	<u>\$ 5750.00</u>	\$ 4.40	<u>\$ 71.88</u>
		land.....	4000.00		50.00
		pers. prop...	750.00		9.38
		improvements.	1000.00		12.50
1925	Fred Schlake	20	<u>\$ 1000.00</u>	\$ 4.40	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
		land only			
1934	Fred Schlake	80	<u>\$ 4125.00</u>	\$ 3.01	<u>\$ 51.56</u>
		land.....	3360.00		42.00
		pers. prop...	315.00		3.94
		improvements.	450.00		5.62
1934	Fred Schlake	20	<u>\$ 840.00</u>	\$ 3.01	<u>\$ 42.00</u>
		land only			
1935	Fred Schlake	80	<u>\$ 5820.00</u>	\$ 2.50	<u>\$ 72.75</u>
		land.....	4700.00		58.75
		pers. prop...	490.00		6.12
		improvements.	630.00		7.88
1935	Fred Schlake	20	<u>\$ 1175.00</u>	\$ 2.50	<u>\$ 58.75</u>
		land only			

Source: Sonoma County Tax Collector, 1888: 45; Ibid, Assessment Rolls.

enough horses to meet its own needs and produce one colt a year for sale in San Francisco (Eldredge interview).

The Jurgensen Ranch, 1949 - 1970

The eldest child and only daughter of Fred Schlake, senior, left the ranch sometime prior to 1900 (U.S. Census, 1900: 179). In San Francisco, Elizabeth met and married Herman Jurgensen. Shortly after their third child was born, Mr. Jurgensen died and the family moved back to Petaluma. There the children and Elizabeth lived in the city, on property owned by Sophia. They attended school in the city and visited the ranch frequently. One of Elizabeth's sons, Frederick P., worked on the ranch and became very close to his "Uncle Fred." In April of 1949, shortly before his death, Fred H. Schlake gave the ranch to his nephew (Sonoma County Recorder, Official Records, Bk. 920, p. 317). For \$10, he also sold the nephew "all farming tools and equipment, poultry, livestock, and chattels" on the farm (Ibid., Bk. 920, pp. 319-20). In what is described as "the unfortunate incident," Fred Jurgensen died a month after his uncle's death. In the settlement of the estate, the ranch was awarded to Elizabeth (Ibid., Bk. 925, pp. 270-3).

The seventy-eight year old daughter of Frederick Henry Schlake could not possibly have handled the ranch by herself. Fortunately, her daughter Dora had married a most unusual man. Shortly after her graduation from the University of California at Berkeley and the completion of her nurse's training, Dora met a young electrical engineer. In 1925, Dora and Bernard E. Eldredge were married and moved to Balboa, in Southern California. Although the Eldredges

visited the ranch frequently, neither had lived at the ranch, and Mr. Eldredge had no ranching experience or knowledge. Yet, he offered to give up his profession, move to Petaluma and take on the responsibilities of running the ranch.

From 1949, until his death in 1956, Bernard ran the ranch for his mother-in-law. He added modern milking equipment for the dairy operations, built a large shop to repair equipment and work at his hobbies, and kept the ranch going. Intelligent, talented, and personable, he was quickly accepted by the leading members of the Petaluma community and assumed an active role in local affairs. Both of Dora's uncles, Fred H. Schlake and Christian Schlake, had served on the local school board. Now Eldredge carried forward that tradition with his service to the Old Adobe School District. So well liked and respected was he, that upon his death in 1956 and the recommendation of the school children, the school board named its new school in his honor. In addition to designating the new building the Bernard Eldredge School, the board also appointed Mrs. Eldredge to fill the unexpected vacancy. From 1956 to her retirement in 1973, Dora Eldredge carried forward the Schlake tradition of community service.

With Bernard's death, responsibility for running the 100-acre ranch fell to Dora Eldredge and her mother. To manage the farm, they eliminated some operations. The milking equipment and cows were sold, returning the ranch to its historical and continuing primary function, the raising of hay. The Eldredge shop was donated and moved to Old Adobe School. Hay production was done "on shares." In 1968, as part of the process of "getting her affairs in order," Mrs. Jurgensen granted a quitclaim deed to the property to her daughter

(Sonoma County Recorder, Official Records, Bk. 2367, pp. 732-4)

Then, in 1969, Elizabeth Jurgensen died at the age of ninety-eight. Dora Eldredge decided that it was no longer either physically possible or financially feasible to continue with the ranch. (Eldredge interview)

Tenant and Landlord, 1970 - 1981

Although the ranch house had remained the owner-residence of Mrs. Jurgensen and Mrs. Eldredge after Bernard's death, the ninety-five acre remainder of the ranch had ceased to be a family-run farm before Dora made the decision to sell. A nearby resident, whose family had settled near present Sonoma State University in 1852, took over management of the hayfields for Mrs. Eldredge. As a financial consultant, he also tried to arrange an investment partnership when Dora decided to sell. When that arrangement did not work, James Anderson handled the transactions which led to the sale of the ranch on 1 September 1970 to Glenn A. Cramer.

Dora moved her residence to the hills northeast of the ranch, but out of sight of the farmstead. Schlake, Jurgensen and Eldredge furnishings, many dating to the mid-nineteenth century, decorated the new house. The remaining farm equipment, household furniture and other possessions were sold at auction. But Dora did not leave completely. For the next six years, she continued to visit the ranch, occasionally staying overnight.

Finally, in 1976, the farmstead was completely abandoned. Although the hayfield continued to be plowed and harvested, both the farmstead

and housestead were left vacant. Neglect and vandalism took their toll. The beautiful lock and doorknob on the front door were cut out; windows were smashed.

To avoid further damage, the present owner began renting the farmstead in 1979. Today, the farmstead serves as the residence for a young man who raises goats, selling both the goats and goatmilk to supplement the income from his regular employment. The income from the rental of the farmstead and surrounding acreage is sufficient to pay the taxes on the property. The Schlake Ranch has fallen victim to large-scale mechanized agriculture and the increasing suburbanization of the surrounding area (The above information is compiled from interviews with Anderson, Eldredge, Fratini and Poole).

THE SCHLAKE RANCH: SITE SURVEY

Site Survey Summary

1. Common Name: Jurgensen Ranch/Bernard E. Eldredge Farm
2. Historic Name: Fred Schlake Ranch
3. Street or Rural Address: 2300 E. Washington Street
City: Petaluma State: California 94952
4. Present Owner: Glen A. Cramer
5. Address: Box Y City: Rancho Mirage State: California
6. Present Use: Residential/Agricultural
7. Past Use: Residential/Agricultural
8. Description and Significance:

A 5-acre Ranch Complex consisting of ranch house, water tower and 17 ranch buildings. (Photo 02/14: Overview)

Housestead

Photo 01/06	Ranch House, Schlake Addition
Photo 01/09	Ranch House, west facade, three portions of ranch house
Photo 01/10	Ranch House and Watertower
Photo 01/15	Ranch House, east view with trumpet vine
Photo 01/12	3 Housestead Outbuildings (privy, dairyhouse, Smokehouse)
Photo 01/13	2 Housestead Outbuildings (shiplap outbuilding east of house; woodshed)

Farmstead

Photo 01/17	Old Barn, front facade
Photo 01/31	Old Barn, back facade
Photo 01/18	Grain House and Chicken Brooder
Photo 01/20	Colony Chicken House with Roof Ventilator
Photo 01/22	New Barn
Photo 01/29	New Barn, detail showing cobblestones
Photo 01/24	Poultry Complex
Photo 01/28	Blacksmith's Shop and Adjacent Foundation

There are 5 additional outbuildings on the property: garage, circa 1925; colony chicken house west of housestead; board and batten outbuilding west of housestead; shiplap outbuilding southwest of house; current pumphouse. See Map 8 for locations.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET FOR ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION
AND SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

9. Property size: 41.786 acres
10. Condition: Fair
11. Resource is: Altered
12. Surroundings: Open Land - Scattered Buildings - Sky Ranch Airport
13. Zoning: County, A1-B6 (primary agricultural; 20-acre density & 2-acre minimum)
14. Threats: Private Development - Neglect
15. Date of enclosed photographs: 13 August 1981 (except 02/14, circa 1970)
16. Primary exterior building material: Redwood
17. Structure is on its original site
18. Year of estimated initial construction: circa 1860
19. Architect & Builder: Unknown
20. Related Features: Barns, outhouse, sheds, outbuildings, watertower, chicken houses.
21. Main theme of historic resource: Economic/Industrial
22. Association with major historical period: American

Date of site survey: August 1981

Prepared by: Connie T. Braitto

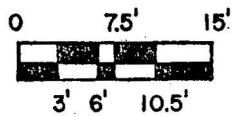
CONTINUATION SHEET: DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

Housetead

The Housetead, comprising the ranchhouse, watertower and six outbuildings is delineated by a picket fence (see Map 8). Natural features that further describe the area are stands of large Cypress and Eucalyptus trees. A five-inch-diameter trumpet vine is located on the east side, adjacent to the oldest section of the house. The outbuildings within the housestead facilitated the processing of products grown on the ranch and provided for the immediate needs of the household.

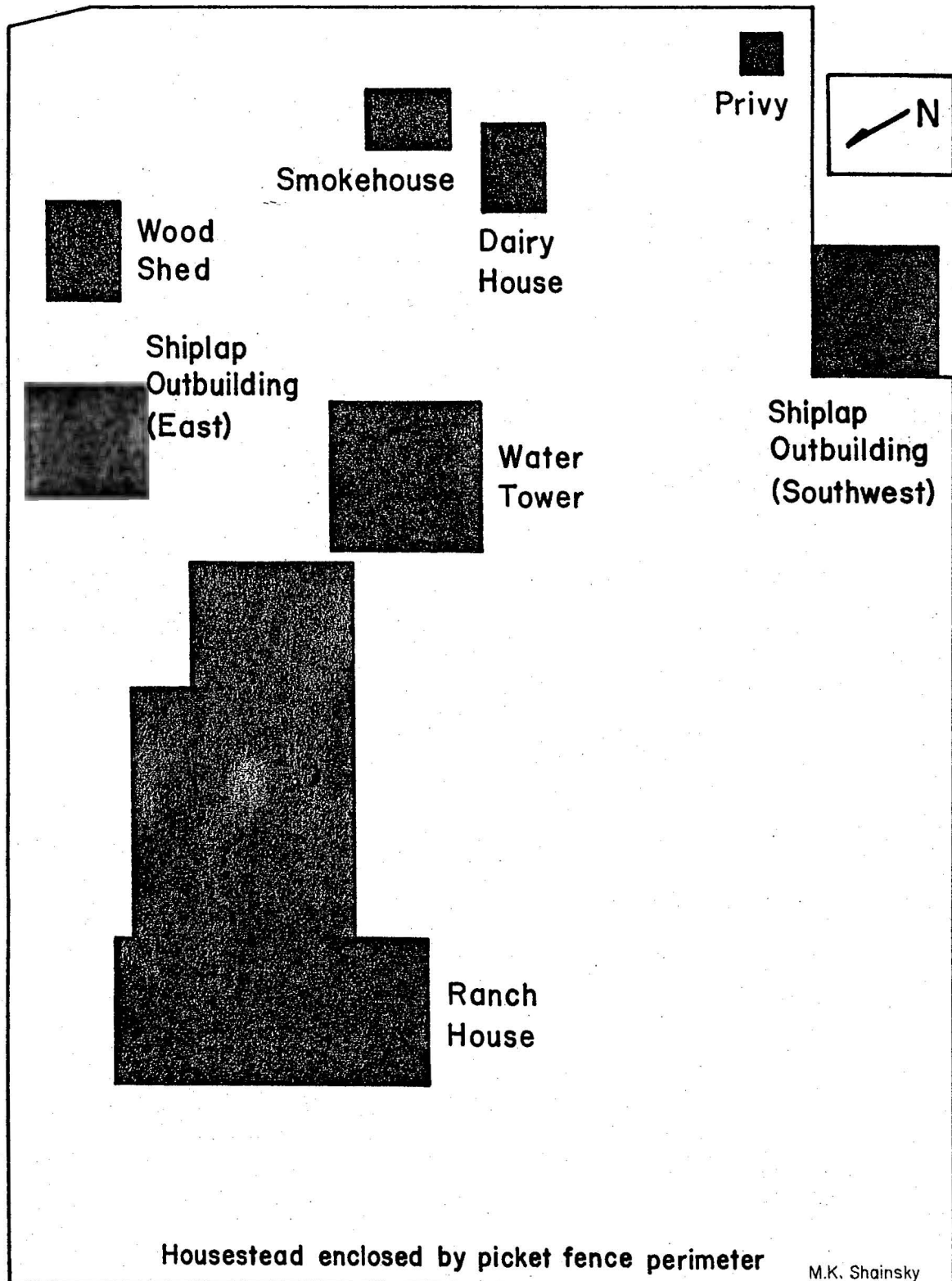
The two-story watertower with shiplap siding is situated at the southwest corner of the house. The windmill and holding tank have been removed. The watertower is set on a deteriorating cement foundation and houses the original hand-dug well which is no longer in use. The well is brick lined; the top 1 1/2 foot collar section is set with old bottles and cans. The rest of the outbuildings are simple gable roofed structures with either board and batten, flush vertical or shiplap siding. They are set on redwood sill foundations. The outbuildings are in a deteriorated condition.

The ranch house is a "T" shaped, gable roofed, redwood structure divided into three basic volumes. The roof covering is asphalt shingles. The house has shiplap siding which was probably sided uniformly when the Schlake addition was completed circa 1895. The original portion of the house is the middle single-story, gable-roofed volume. There are two original 6/6 light sash windows on the west



SCHLAKE RANCH HOUSESTEAD

Source: Braito,
Harris and
Shainsky site
survey.



side. A shed roof porch extends across the east side with a solid panel offset entrance door. The two windows on the east side of the cottage have been altered. There is a short sculptured interior chimney.

The interior of the original cottage consists of two rooms of equal dimensions: a kitchen and a living room. Both rooms have simple redwood wainscoting covering the lower one-third of the walls and flat redwood molding around the windows and doors. The windows and doors are of smaller dimensions than those in the two-story Schlake addition. The floors are tongue and groove redwood. Walls are constructed of lath and plaster. However, the living room has been recently paneled. The cottage has a redwood sill foundation. Square nails were not identified in this portion of the house, but investigation of the underpinnings of the cottage was not possible. This portion of the ranch house is indicative of early small-scale ranch dwellings built circa 1860. It is possible that this portion of the house was built prior to 1859 when ownership was transferred from Frederick Alberding to George D. Green.

The "first addition" is attached to the original cottage at the south gable end, forming a linear extension with a broken roofline. This small, single story, gable roof addition has one 6/6 light sash window on the west side and one 1/1 light sash window on the east side. A small, rough sawn, vertical board door is located on the south-facing gable end.

The interior consists of two small rooms which have been remodeled. One of the rooms has been made into a bathroom. The smaller room with door is used as a service porch/pantry and has the same wainscoting

as the rest of the cottage. The addition also has lath and plaster walls. This portion of the house is an early addition, one made prior to the Schlakes' purchase of the ranch in 1885 (Eldredge interview).

The Schlake addition facing East Washington Street is perpendicular to the north gable end of the original cottage, forming the "T" shape. The two-story, gable roof addition has a center roof gable facing front with a fan-like gable ornament, boxed cornice and plain architrave. It is a simple example of late Gothic Revival vernacular architecture in Sonoma County. (The Gothic Revival style is more commonly associated with the 1870's in Sonoma County farmhouse construction. Both the information from Mrs. Bernard E. Eldredge, that her grandfather - Fred Schlake - built this addition sometime after 1885, and the type of millwork used for detailing on this portion of the house support the estimated building date of circa 1895.) There are 1/1 light sash windows with hoods placed symmetrically on the front facade. Sheltering the front entrance door is a single gable roof porch with fan motif stickwork in the gable end, turned posts, brackets and stickwork balustrade. The stickwork detailing on the porch differs from that on the center front gable roof end", indicating that it may have been altered from the original. The milled roof and window detailing on the house were commonly used on residences in the Petaluma area around the turn of the century. This portion of the house rests on cement blocks.

The interior consists of a total of four rooms, two on each story arranged on either side of a central hall and stairway. The Schlake addition has original tongue and groove redwood floors, window

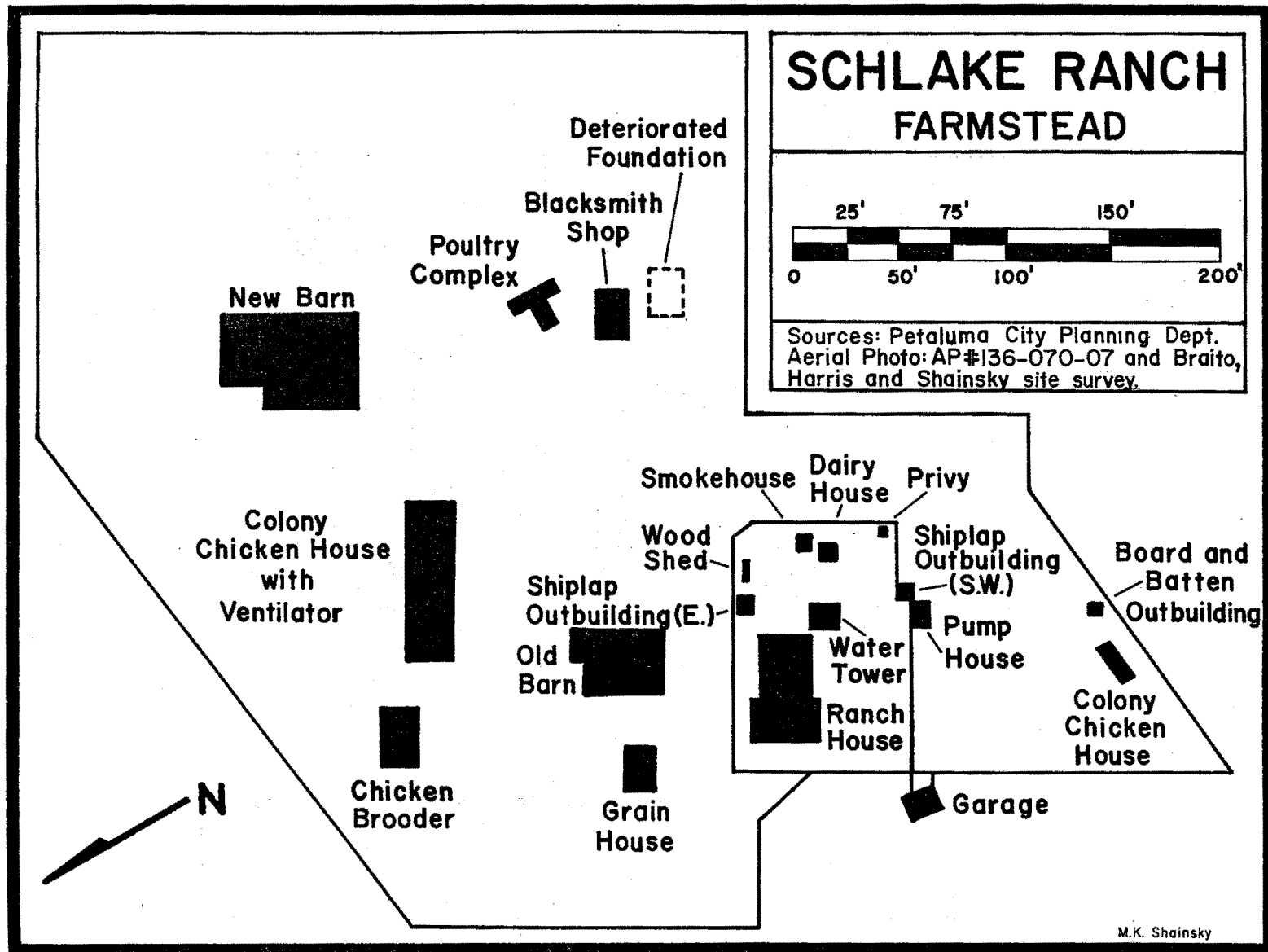
and door molding with bullseye corners, solid panel doors and turned newel posts and balustrade on the stairs. Two of the four rooms have been altered from the original with the addition of cork paneling, sheetrock and a drop ceiling. Enclosed cabinets have been added under the staircase and the front panelled door is not original.

This portion of the house was built by Frederick Schlake after he purchased the property in 1885. This simplified version, showing the influence of the Gothic Revival style, was built circa 1895. The house illustrates the adaptability of the style to the needs of modest farmhouse construction.

Farmstead

The farmstead consists of 12 buildings used for various ranch purposes (see Map 9). There are scattered stands of Eucalyptus and Cypress trees planted as windbreaks for the ranch buildings. All of the outbuildings are one story structures with the exception of the two barns which stand as the major focal points in the farmstead. There were no square nails identified in the construction of any of the farmstead buildings. All of the buildings are in a deteriorated condition.

The Old Barn (Photo 01/17 & 01/31) has a gently sloping gable roof with vertical siding, corrugated tin roof, and a hay trolley projecting outward on the uncovered ridge pole. There are hinged hay loft doors in the front and back gable ends. Hinged doors, front and back, are at ground level for loading hay into the mow. There



are hinged rough-sawn wood doors on the front and back of each gable and end extension for entrance to the stalls and tackle room. Remnants of a cut stone floor were evidenced inside the southeast extended bay, which has board and batten siding. The barn has numerous hatch window openings for light and ventilation. Six shallow stalls with feed bins and wooden floor are located in the southeast extended bay. Smaller stalls with feed bins are on the north side. The center was used for hay storage. The old barn predates the period when Fred Schlake owned the ranch. The barn is typical of barn architecture during the period and is particularly suited to the climatic conditions of Sonoma County, where livestock required little shelter.

Grain House and Chicken Brooder. (Photo 01/18) The grain house is a shingled gable roof structure with board and batten siding. There is a sliding hatch window opening on the front gable end, a concrete floor, evidence of a hoist on the interior for lifting feed bags, and a pulley opening for ventilation on the rear gable end. It is situated in close proximity to the old barn. The chicken brooder has a shingled gable roof with board and batten siding and rests on a redwood sill foundation.

The Colony Chicken House (Photo 01/20) is a long, gable roof building with board and batten siding and centrally placed roof ventilator. The roof is corrugated tin; the foundation is redwood sill. There are shallow screened openings immediately under the roofline extending along the east side of the building and a series of rectangular, ground-level window openings on the west side.

The New Barn (Photo 01/22 & 01/29) is a two-story gable roof barn with vertical siding and offset hinged doors on the front facade. The barn has an uncovered ridge pole and hay trolley extension with

hinged hay loft door. There is a shed-roof single-story extension on the south side which was used as a shop for repairing farm equipment. The back gable end has a single story gable roof addition attached to the outside of the barn to house farm equipment. This addition was made in the 1930's. The interior of the barn has a stone floor (Photo 01/29). This barn is identified with the period from 1911 to 1949 when Frederick H. Schlake, Jr., owned the ranch complex. The barn appears as though it was used for hay storage and for housing motorized farm equipment.

The Poultry Complex (Photo 01/24) is a series of small, gable-roof, board and batten sheds used as colony chicken houses.

The Blacksmith's Shop and adjacent foundation. (Photo 01/28)
A gable roof, board and batten shed equipped with kiln and smithy-related machinery on the ceiling. The roof has been changed to corrugated tin. This building was moved here from the neighboring Henry Schlake Ranch. The adjacent foundation was for the large shop belonging to Bernard Eldredge. It was moved to the Old Adobe School following his death in 1956.



02/14 - OVERVIEW OF FARMSITE
Courtesy Dora Jurgensen Eldredge



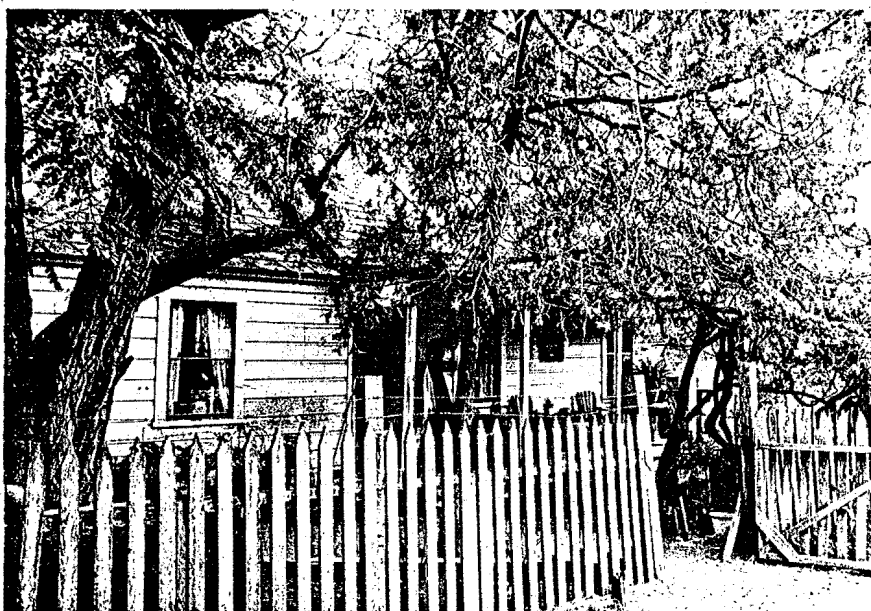
01/06 - RANCH HOUSE, SCHLAKKE ADDITION



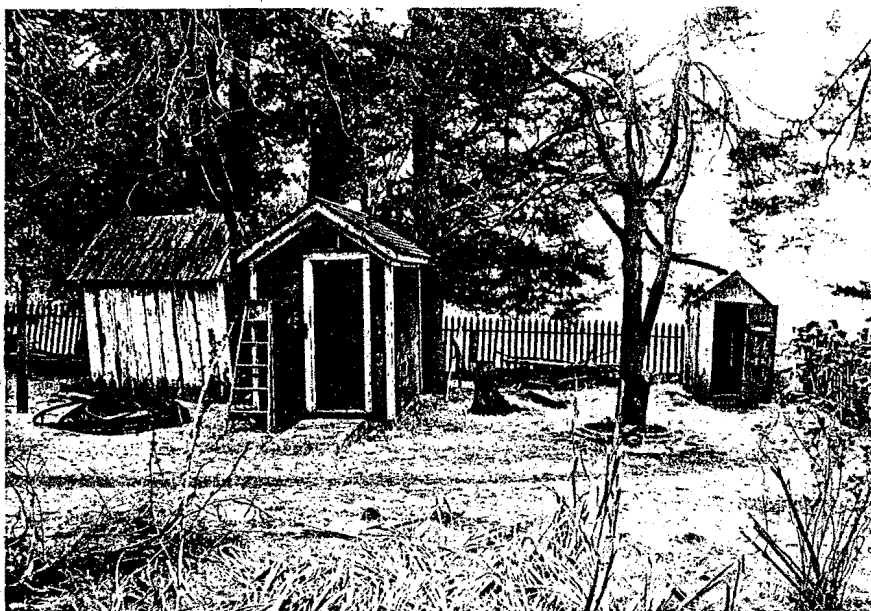
01/10 - RANCH HOUSE
and
WATER TOWER



01/09 - RANCH HOUSE, WEST FACADE
three portions of ranch house



01/15 - RANCH HOUSE, EAST VIEW
with trumpet vine



01/12 - THREE HOUSESTEAD OUTBUILDINGS
Smokehouse, Dairyhouse, Privy



01/13 - TWO HOUSESTEAD OUTBUILDINGS
Shiplap Outbuilding East of House, Woodshed



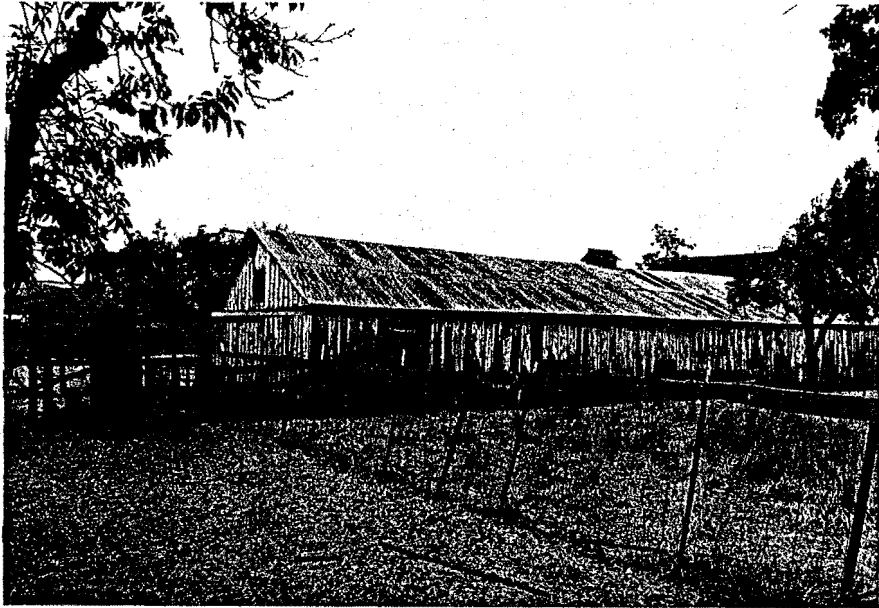
01/17 - OLD BARN, Front Facade



01/31 - OLD BARN, Back Facade



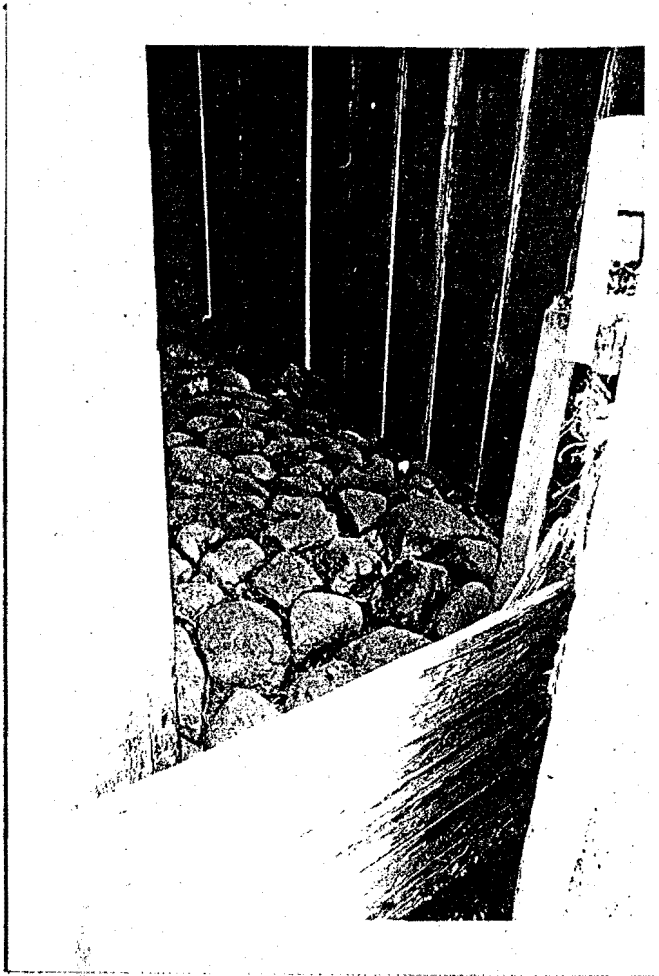
01/18 - GRAIN HOUSE and CHICKEN BROODER



01/20 - COLONY HOUSE with Roof Ventilator



01/22 - NEW BARN



01/29 - NEW BARN, detail
showing cobblestones



01/24 - POULTRY COMPLEX



01/28 - BLACKSMITH'S SHOP and
ADJACENT FOUNDATION

FROM SCHLAKE RANCH TO SKY RANCH AIRPORT

Historical Significance of the Schlake Ranch Site

Two historical themes are associated with the 41.786 acre site: exploration and settlement of the area between 1823 and 1855, and the economic development of the area between 1855 and the present. The site has no national, state, or local significance based upon its associations with the establishment of the Sonoma Mission or Vallejo's operations at the Petaluma Adobe. Although Martin Cooke played an important role both in the development of southern Sonoma County and in the early political history of the state, the site is only minimally related to his activities.

The primary association of the site during the period prior to 1885 is with the growth of the wheat industry in the Petaluma Valley. Until 1882, the site was a portion of larger parcels primarily devoted to the production of grain for export to the urban market of San Francisco. As such, it was typical of the land east of Petaluma cultivated during that period. Although both the Greens and Alberdings were large landholders, they appear to have made no significant contributions to the social, cultural, or political life of the area. Representative of large ranches, the site merely added to Petaluma's leading position as a grain-producing area. The historical record is both incomplete and ambiguous, but it does not appear that either Green or Alberding resided on the farmstead located within the site.

The primary significance of the site comes from its association with the Schlake owners, - Frederick Henry Schlake, Frederick Henry

Schlake, Jr., Elizabeth Schlake Jurgensen, and Dora Jurgensen Eldredge. As long-time residents, they naturally gained prominence in the community. They served on the Payran and Old Adobe school boards. And it is the husband of the last of these owners, Bernard Eldredge, who has achieved the greatest local recognition. Clearly, the site is associated only with individuals of local significance during the period 1885 - 1970. It is representative of the lives, farmstead structure and economic activity of middle-class farm proprietors living on ranches of 80 to 320 acres during the period when Petaluma changed from grain production to dairy and poultry production. Too small for commercial dairy operations, it was also far larger than the typical egg ranch in Petaluma.

Historical Significance of the Schlake Ranch Structures

The 5-acre farmstead, the southwesterly three acres of which would be impacted by the proposed project, supports the visual quality of the agricultural land in the area of East Washington Street and Old Adobe Road. The configuration of the Cypress and Eucalyptus windbreaks planted from the 1880's to the 1920's surround the housestead and farmstead, making it a cohesive unit. The scale and building materials of the original cottage indicate that it dates from the early 1860's. From the 1860's until the 1920's, the ranch house was expanded and ranch buildings added, creating a layering effect that reflects the growth and adaptation of moderately sized ranches to major agricultural trends in the Petaluma area from hay growing to the chicken industry. However, the main use of the land has been

the production of hay and grain from the 1850's to the present day.

The individual buildings have no architectural or historical significance on a state or national level. However, even in the present deteriorated state, the ranch, taken as a whole, has retained its original integrity on a local level as a working example of a self-sufficient farm that has remained relatively unchanged since the 1890's. The character of the deterioration and neglect was noted as follows: lack of maintained foundations, which caused irregular floors and structures to lean; dry rot and termite damage; incomplete roofing for some of the outbuildings; failed septic system leading to reuse of the 100-year old outhouse and abandonment of the water system for drinking purposes.

Evaluation of the Potential Effect of the Sky Ranch Airport
Relocation on the Schlake Ranch

The proposed Sky Ranch Airport Relocation Project requires acquisition of the southwesterly 41.786 acres of the 100-acre ranch. A "Clear Zone" would require the relocation or demolition of all structures located within the housestead, the garage, and all structures southwest of the housestead within the farmstead. It would also remove approximately 38 acres from hay production. Barns and outbuildings northeast of the housestead would not be impacted, but would be disassociated from the housestead. Development of the Sky Ranch Airport Relocation Project would clearly cause adverse impacts to the site and its associated structures.

Preservation and Mitigation Recommendations

If the site were not in such a deteriorated state, the preferred action would be that the site be excluded from development and thereby preserved. Despite its primary agricultural zoning, the financial return on the ranch since at least 1970 has not been sufficient to encourage routine maintenance, much less needed repair.

Thus it is recognized that this measure may not be feasible. If development is to take place within the site boundaries, relocation of the housestead appears neither historically nor financially justified. The original integrity of the site would be lost. The present deteriorated state of the structures would make relocation prohibitively expensive.

In the event that the historical farm complex cannot be excluded from development and must be demolished, it is recommended that the site be fully documented and that each structure be fully documented in accordance with Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards. This would include additional primary source research, especially newspapers and oral interviews, photodocumentation, measurement and scaled drawings for each structure, and a map showing the relationship of the buildings to each other. The cumulative effect on urban encroachment upon the farmlands of East Petaluma and the lack of documentation regarding similar sites warrant such action. Since no prehistoric sites or trash sites were identified, no recommendations are made unless such sites are located at the time of development and can not be covered. In that event, a program of full scale data retrieval would be appropriate. Since the privy has remained at its

present location for over 100 years, it is unlikely that this site would have more than minimal archaeological value. It is recommended that the privy site be covered. If that is not possible, a qualified historical archaeologist should be retained and a program of data retrieval instituted. The trash deposit within the water tower, the upper 18 to 24 inches, contains bottles and cans probably associated with abandonment of the tower in the 1930's. This site should also be covered. If historic materials are discovered in the privy, the well, or other sites, they should be analyzed and a report prepared.

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Sonoma County Recorder - continued

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- n.d. Deeds
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- 1870b Ninth Census. Manuscript, Schedule 3 - Productions of Agriculture. Sonoma County, Vallejo Township. (Photocopy, RESHP).
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- 1880b Tenth Census. Manuscript, Schedule 2 - Productions of Agriculture. Sonoma County, Vallejo Township. (Photocopy, RESHP).
- 1900 Twelfth Census. Manuscript, Schedule 1 - Population. Sonoma County, Vallejo Township. (Microfilm, RESHP)

United States Geological Survey

7.5 Minute Series (topographic)

- 1954 Cotati Quadrangle
- 1968 Glen Ellen Quadrangle
- 1954 Glen Ellen Quadrangle
- 1953 Petaluma Quadrangle
- 1954 Petaluma River Quadrangle

15 Minute Series (topographic)

- 1954 Petaluma Quadrangle
- 1954 Santa Rosa Quadrangle

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